

Hey, everyone.

Firstly, I would like to stress that I am not stealing this fic. I enjoyed the original by Quatreastrophe, and when I heard it was discontinued, I sent a message asking if I could take over. Quatreastrophe answered in the affirmative, and here is one of the emails sent to me.

Sorry I didn't get back to you a little bit sooner. (College finals next week. Yay.) But anyways, yeah, that'd be perfectly fine if you wanted to take over "Invisibly Jaded." I think I wrote it on my profile too, but I have some partially edited/rewritten versions of chapters one through eight as well as a partial chapter nine. If you want, I can try and send those to you via email attachment (Microsoft word), and you can choose if you want to keep some things or just throw it out. It's been a while, but I don't think I completely liked what I had in the ninth chapter, and it may not make much sense to anyone else either. Unfortunately, my notes for the story are a jumbled mess of handwritten garbage, and some pieces I think got thrown away in the Great RoomCleaning of March 2008. I can, however, either type up a bit of what I have, (I have a rough timeline of backstory things that probably would have been revealed later, and I think a little on why Harry's powers are leaving) or you can just make up stuff based on your own ideas. Please get back to me on any of that. Also, whenever you start posting up a new chapter, I can put a notice in my story to direct people to it. Right now there are 1615 people that still have it on their story alert.

And there's my proof. So, the first eight chapters will be slightly altered and edited, and from then on out, it'll be all original, but I will be following some plans Quatreastrophe asked of me to use. So, I suppose, my plans for the story will begin around chapter twelve or thirteen.

Finally, Harry, not acting like a warrior.

This was always an issue, that a lot of people thought Harry didn't have the correct mindset to be a warrior. Quatreastrophe told me to address this issue when I mentioned some aspects of the fic would be darker, and let me tell you all something:

Harry has been trained to be a warrior. He has never actually had a real fight. He's spent eleven years on the isles, and eight years of those training. Never once has he actually killed someone. He's a rookie, he lacks experience.

My continuation will address that. Originally, he is sometimes too confident in his abilities, and hence acts more aggressive than the original, but as time goes on, he will mature, becoming more powerful- and more importantly, knowing when to use it, and even more importantly, knowing how to use it fully.

Funny, I don't follow any of those important moral issues, but, hey.

Finally, the story will be rather easy-going, until we start getting to the good bits. Don't worry, they shouldn't be too long in coming...

So, here it is, Chapter 1, edited.

## Chapter I- A Great Mistake

The grandfather clock struck eleven, and sounded eleven long notes, marking the hour. A soft ticking resumed as the last sound faded into

the night, and the pendulum continued swing on its eternal path, back and forth, back and forth. The house was deathly still, silent. None of the house's inhabitants made a sound, all comfortable in their dreams. No, no sounds at all, but the empty air was warning them as well as it could. The calm before the storm.

Loud cracks sounded outside the house, and several cloaked figures appeared, literally out of thin air. They awaited one more, their master, as they waited, their uniforms billowing in the autumn breeze.

The master appeared, his head covered with a hood rather than the white masks worn by his minions. The white masks of the Death Eaters.

From the shadows of his hood, a mouth curled into a malicious grin, thus increasing the fear that this man, or monster created in the hearts of man and beast alike.

"Tonight, my loyal servants. Tonight...is the end. The end of all opposition to us. And tomorrow, a new day will rise, a day which shall always be ours, as none will stand in my way! None!" The master broke into gleeful laughter, before resuming. "Not even the muggle-lover fool Dumbledore will not stop me! And so, after tonight, my reign will be supreme, an eternal reign, that will stamp out all blood-traitors, Mudbloods and Muggle filth..."

The master trailed off, enamoured in his daydream, before he continued. "Tonight, the Potter family shall be removed from the land of the living."

A pale cold hand pulled back the black hood, revealing a face that had struck terror into the hearts of even the bravest of men, a face that had been the last sight to many in their dying moments, a face of a man that was once a handsome prodigy, now a twisted maniac. The Dark Lord Voldemort was on the hunt tonight.

The instant the Death Eaters crossed the property line, they triggered an alarm ward, causing a shrieking noise to start reverberating through the house, waking all residents.

James and Lily Potter jumped from their bed, knowing immediately what had happened. Peter, Peter, their friend, their old schoolmate...had betrayed them, and now the Death Eaters were here, to kill them and their children. The two grabbed their wands –James staying a little longer to grab his glasses- and rushed from their bedroom, determined to protect their children at whatever cost.

A swift descent down the stairs ended as they came upon their attackers. A barrage of deadly curses shot across the dining room at the married couple, still in their sleepwear, battled their intruders.

In the back of their minds, they noted that the Death Eater group was rather small, only six. But distracted, they easily quashed those thoughts and went back to their fight, and neither noticed one figure sneak out of the room, leaving the Death Eaters on their own.

Voldemort easily found the right door to his prey- magic acting as his guide- and blew it down. From within a shared cot, two almost identical boys stared at him, one from piercing, almost unnatural emerald eyes, the other with deeper, softer brown eyes. Jet-black hair that already looked like it would become just like their father's was tousled on the heads of the fifteen month old twins, the Potter twins, the twins that had been plaguing his mind for over a year.

One was apparently destined to be his undoing. So, before they had a chance to grow powerful enough to destroy him, he would destroy them first. After all, he did not know which one was the one he needed to eliminate, but then again, the life of an infant would not weigh heavily on a man with no conscience. However, it could be neither of the two boys, but that was why he already had a plan to take care of the Longbottom boy after this particular mission. After all, taking chances meant taking risks.

He raised his wand, and the screams and shouts of the battle in another part of the house seemed to fade as he focused entirely on the huddled infants, and he allowed his hate to fill himself up completely as he prepared a spell like no other. He pulled his arm back...and flung it forward, screaming two feared words to all wizards, unleashing all his hate and a torrent of magic.

"AVADA KEDAVRA!"

It was almost as if time went into slow motion. The sickly green of the curse burst from his wand and shot at the young twins. The curse of death's velocity increased as it travelled towards innocent victims. It struck...and for a moment, time seemed to froze.

One of the boys pushed his twin down, protecting him with his body. The Killing Curse struck his forehead.

The Avada Kedavra killed with no mark. Then why had a cut appeared on the boy's forehead, in the shape of a bolt of lightning?

The bleeding wound almost seemed to crackle with green energy, and the child, still alive, looked straight at his intended killer, green eyes almost glowing with power.

And suddenly, a pulse of magic flung itself from the cut, turning back the Killing Curse on the caster, who had been watching stunned at the events, and he froze in shock and fear, before the curse struck his body.

The spirit was ejected, and the empty body crumpled and disappeared into ashes.

The wild pulse of magic, and the remnants of the failing killing curse, smashed themselves at the walls, and the room began to shake.

Chunks of the ceiling fell away, as what was left of the magic ignited the wall.

The emerald-eyed boy collapsed, exhausted, as his wound bled. The other pulled himself free, only to scrape the skin on his palm on some rubble, before crying himself to a deep sleep.

Dark magic burst through the room, continuing its wave of destruction.

The unconscious twins lay there, awaiting their saviour.

"Lost a lot of blood..."

"They'll be okay..."

"...palm!"

"-wandless!"

A five-year-old Harry Potter yawned and slowly rose from his sleep, his thoughts still on his strange dream. He still didn't know what it meant, but he was sure it must have been a memory from somewhere, probably from the hospital when he was little over a year old. Probably a few snatches of the conversation he'd heard at St. Mungos after his twin brother Hayden had somehow got rid of the Dark Lord Voldemort.

Another dream he often had was of a voice screaming two words he couldn't quite make out, before there was a bright green flash.

Harry climbed out of bed and left his room, closing the door quietly behind him. He glanced across the hallway, looking at the door that was the gateway to the room that belonged to his esteemed brother.

No noises emitting from the room. Clearly, his brother was already out and about.

The door was decorated with all kinds of papers, Spellotaped on, many of which had stick-men drawing, and scribbles and wobbly lettering spelling out 'Hayden.' The sight of it just reminded Harry of his own blank door. He could have decorated it if he really wanted to, but he simply didn't want to draw any attention to himself.

As much as it was out of five-year-old nature to do so, Harry had decided that it was often best for him to not draw attention to himself, and thus, stay invisible.

There was nothing else Harry hated then when the family went out in public and someone would mistake him for Hayden. The disappointed or sometimes even, disapproving gazes he received when they realised he was just Harry, not Hayden, the vanquisher of Voldemort, haunted Harry. They destroyed what little self-esteem he had, making him feel so...useless, helpless, that he should have done more when Voldemort attacked.

Not that he could even remember what happened, being only fifteen months at the time.

James Potter strode down the staircase towards the wonderful aroma of breakfast his wife was cooking. And, as he regularly did, he admired the framed newspaper cut-outs that lined the staircase walls.

THE BOY-WHO-LIVED!

Hayden Potter saves us all!

YOU-KNOW-WHO DEFEATED!

## The True Story of the Fated Night!

Those were merely some of the many articles dictating the events of that night, when Voldemort was defeated at the hands of his son...or more precisely, defeated at the hand of his son. Hayden was discovered with bloody marks on his right hand, and investigators had figured he used some form of powerful wandless magic, and forcing the magic through the hand of a body still not used to such, caused the bleeding wound.

His other son, Harry, had an unusually shaped scar on his head, but the investigators passed it off as an injury due to falling debris, since Hayden also received a bruise on his head from a chunk of plaster.

"Mornin', Daddy!"

James had wandered into the kitchen to be greeted by the very boy he had been thinking about.

"Well, hello there, birthday boy!" James greeted cheerfully, lifting the boy into his arms. "Ready for the big day! Five, big year you know. Halfway there to being ten!"

Hayden grinned with such a smile that it looked like his face would split. "Yup! Mummy says we can have cake and ice cream and balloons and presents! Lots of presents! An' a big party with lots and lots of people, like Moony and Padfooty!"

"Later, Hayden dear. Sit back down and finish your breakfast," Lily said, still busy trying to feed the only daughter of the Potter Family, the two-year-old Oriana. Hayden started squirming and wriggling in his father's arms, until James let him loose and set him down gently on the ground.

Finally, the hinges on the kitchen door squeaked quietly as the last Potter entered, discreet as possible. He didn't want to do anything to



ruin Hayden's birthday. It was his too, obviously, but that didn't matter.

Harry knew he wasn't the important one, so it was okay if he got just a normal party with a normal amount of gifts. He didn't really want the load of presents that witches and wizards from all corners of Great Britain would bring to his brother.

He had only made two requests, a Golden Snitch – it didn't even have to be a real one, even a practise one would do fine- and maybe a broom. It didn't even have to be fancy, just something he could fly, even if it was just twenty feet above the ground. Hayden had asked for a Quaffle, seeming to be more of a Chaser when it came to Quidditch.

Harry grabbed a plate and took a few slices of toast and a glass of orange juice before retreating back to his room to pass the hours till the party began. Awkwardly, he shifted the glass into the crook of his elbow so he could twist the doorknob and push the door open. Placing the plate on the bedside table, Harry propped himself against the pillows, taking a book which he had still not finished reading.

A few hours later, Harry finished the book. After carefully putting it aside, he decided he'd go to the party, since he'd heard the telltale sounds of laughter, music and lively chatter start not too long ago.

After changing out of his nightwear, Harry stared in awe as he reached the main floor. Banners were hung from the ceiling or attached to the walls, announcing 'Happy Birthday.' Balloons of red and gold littered the place, and a huge birthday cake was on a table at the side of the room displaying a simple 'Happy 5th Birthday!' in scarlet icing.

As Harry marvelled at the decorations, an unfamiliar man approached him.

"Well, hello there Hay-rry." The man stopped himself as he saw the piercing emerald eyes and lightning bolt scar. He blinked a few times, but kept a straight face and strutted across the room, having noticed Harry's brother.

Harry lowered his head, and walked into a dark corner, hoping no one else would mistake him for Hayden.

Contrary to what some might say, Harry was not even remotely envious of his twin. Hayden was actually pretty nice, and the two often played together for long hours. Hayden could have the fame, the attention, and the gifts. Harry didn't care what Hayden had, as long as he knew his mum and dad cared for him as well, and didn't forget about him...but he still wanted a Snitch.

Harry continued watching people from his corner. Occasionally, he would see Hayden showing people his famous scar. The scar itself was relatively thick, white, and covered a good portion of his right palm in a rough, circular shape.

Whenever Harry saw the scar, he would only ever think it must have been pretty painful to have all that skin ripped away. Some had even told Harry he was lucky to get away with only a cut on the forehead.

As the temperature increased- being July 31st, the party eventually shifted outdoors, where Harry took refuge hiding under a table, masked by a decorative tablecloth. He was content to watch people's shoes and robe hems as different groups chatted around the snacks and punch bowl located on the table above him.

"-this is a great party. Hayden even shook my hand! Can't wait to tell the guys at work that I, not only go to meet, but actually got to touch his scar! Manny's going to be so jealous- guy's wanted to meet the kid for ages! And Marie...heheh, can't wait to see her reaction!"

"Yeah, same here Al. Think the crazy woman's already got a wedding

dress picked out. I mean for the love of Merlin, the kid's only five! She'll be forty by the time he's old enough!"

"Yep, she's a weirdo at that."

"Or she likes her ones young..."

The two burst out laughing, as another man approached.

"Ere, has anyone seen the other Potter kid? ...what's his name...Harry? Got a little something for him too, but could only find Hayden's present pile..."

"Harry?...nah. Haven't seen 'im, mate. Ask the parents...they're by the cake table with Hayden."

Harry crawled forwards a little to get a look at the man who had actually brought him a present. He couldn't see the man's face though, just a dark blue robe and a bag of various sweets. Harry started to smile, but quickly covered his mouth as a cloud of pipe smoke drifted over to his table and threatened to make him cough. Try as he might, Harry could not stop his body's reaction to the smoke, and let out several harsh, barking coughs.

"What the-" The present-bearing man spoke up again.

Harry could not stop coughing as the smoke lingered in the windless air. The tablecloth was lifted, and the group of men peered under it. Two stood up quickly and looked across the garden to verify Hayden was still with his parents, before going back to observing Harry.

"Ah, you must be Harry!" The man with the present said. He outstretched a hand under the table and helped pull Harry out and onto his feet. He handed over a bag of sweets, tied at the top with shining ribbons.

Harry stopped coughing as a breeze blew the smoke away, and the man spoke up again.

"Happy birthday Harry!"

Harry smiled at the sweets, then up at the man. He hadn't expected this! Someone remembered him! They remembered it was his birthday too!

"Hey, could you introduce me to that brother of yours?" The man asked.

The question was asked innocently enough, but Harry's smile fell as he caught on. He was being...used. Instantly, he gave the bag of sweets back to the man. "I'm not allowed to take sweets from strangers." He waited, before continuing. "Hayden's over there," Harry pointed dully.

As the man instantly turned, Harry slipped away from the group, head lowered, salty tears threatening to spill from his eyes. How did he allow his hopes to rise? These people didn't care. No one cared. He was Harry. Just Harry. A nobody.

A whistle sounded across the garden, and everyone's attention was drawn to Lily Potter as she removed her fingers from her lips, satisfied everyone was paying attention.

James –standing next her- began speaking. "Okay everyone, present time! Gather round, gather round...yes, thank you..."

Harry sighed as heard the announcement. He withdrew from his passing time activity of pulling grass from the lawn, and he walked to the cake table to join the rest of his family, and open his share of presents. He still hoped he had a snitch...he really hoped.

"Now we're all set, Sirius? Remus? If you two would, let's get

started!"

Sirius took a deep, extravagant bow and reached for the first present. His blue eyes sparkled brightly, with an air of mischief, so very unlike the haunted look they had taken temporarily four years ago. After the attack, James and Lily had been recovering from injuries. While they recuperated in St. Mungos, Sirius had been accused of betraying the couple and murdering several Muggles when he confronted Pettigrew. With all the confusion, it had taken a week for James and Lily to receive news of the situation. He had been released from Azkaban straight after they testified to his innocence, and a search was started for Peter Pettigrew. For a few months after that, Sirius hadn't been the happiest of people though. Dementors were not pleasant to be around with for a few seconds, let alone days.

Sirius looked at the label. "Aaaaand, here's one for Hayden!" He cheerfully announced, placing the colourfully wrapped box in front of the five-year-old.

Sirius and Remus took turns passing presents over.

Hayden...Hayden...Hayden...Hayden...It went on and on, but Harry didn't care. The presents on top of the pile were just from the guests, many attending just to meet the Boy-Who-Lived. The presents for him, from his family and the people he knew, would be at the bottom, since they had been put there before the guests arrived.

Hayden...Hayden... "Harry!"

Harry's head shot up as Sirius placed a present in front of him. Unwrapping the package with the precision of a surgeon- causing the impatient Sirius to roll his eyes- Harry got to the gift. It was a box of Chocolate Frogs with an envelope taped to it. Harry opened the envelope to find a gift certificate for a Muggle Bookshop. Harry smiled happily at the audience, and saw Remus nod his head in acknowledgement. Harry couldn't wait to get the next book in the

children's fiction series, Encyclopaedia Brown. He always loved trying to solve the mystery before the end of each tale.

Hayden...Hayden...Hayden...

Harry's eyes searched the dwindling pile, looking for a small package that could hold his Snitch. The broom didn't matter; the ones his dad already had worked just fine. After all, he had to get the Snitch. They weren't that expensive, and he had only asked for two things. So far, apart from Remus' gift, Harry had received a new pack of cards for Exploding Snap, Wizarding sweets, and some clothes. But Hayden had received pretty much all a child could ever dream of, and quite a few things a child wouldn't have thought of, due to his adoring public.

"This is a big one, eh Hayden! Wonder what it could be?" Sirius said, a knowing look in his eyes. After ripping the paper away, a wooden chest was revealed.

"Quidditch!" Hayden exclaimed happily, flinging open the lid to see a brand-new set of game balls. The Bludgers appeared to be made of a material similar to foam, but other than that, all was okay.

There was even a Snitch. Surely, surely, this had to be for both brothers. Surely they hadn't forgotten how much Harry enjoyed the game, especially Seeking. Surely they hadn't...

A piece of wrapping paper had fallen in front of Harry. The tag was stuck to it.

To: Hayden Potter.

Not Hayden and Harry, not the Potter Brothers, not even the Potter Twins. Just Hayden.

Harry looked back at the table, but the table was now empty, even the people had gone, seeing as the Quidditch set was the last

present.

Harry was fine though. Fine. After all, Hayden was The Boy-Who-Lived. Harry was still just Harry. Just Harry. Just Harry. He repeated the phrase to himself, over and over again. Just Harry. Just Harry.

He had gotten some presents after all, and he knew some people didn't get any at all, or didn't even know when their birthdays were. He lived in a nice house, and had his own room, and had food every day. Some people didn't live in nice houses, or have food every day. He had plenty compared to some people, so Harry kept telling himself to stop being so selfish.

So what if he had only asked for two things, and got neither. So what if Hayden got a ridiculous amount of gifts, including one he wanted. One he really wanted, with all his heart.

But Harry was fine. He was fine, perfect, wonderful, not upset in the least. Just fine. Just Harry.

A wine glass nearby shattered.

Okay, maybe he was a little upset. ...Maybe he was a lot upset...maybe...maybe he was...

Harry heard Oriana giggle happily, as she, and everyone else, watched Hayden practice with the Snitch. Tears sprang to Harry's eyes.

He started backing away, but still, none noticed. He began to walk faster, until he reached the woods behind the house. Once he got to the edge, he ran.

Harry sprinted as fast as his small legs could carry him, his eyes eventually being blinded by the tears that were spilling over. Deeper,

and deeper he ran, until he stumbled on a tree root and fell, grazing his elbow on a rock.

And Harry could take it no longer. He screamed, before breaking down in tears.

He was...forgotten.

So there you have it. Chapter One, originally by Quatreastrophe, edited by LightningHunter.

By the way, what is Encyclopaedia Brown? I don't even know if it's a real book or not...should have asked Quatreastrophe about that, I guess...



## Chapter II- This House is not a Home

As the boy cried his heart out, wind began to swirl around the sobbing figure. The trees swayed their branches, wind whipping through their leaves like a noise, voices, their own secret languages. Dead leaves rustled across the ground, and there was one last sound, the quietest, as drops of blood dripped from Harry's elbow.

His emotion released, Harry finally calmed himself, allowing his mind to focus on the near-silent woods. He wiped away the tears with his arm, and sniffed. Another breeze caused fallen leaves to roll across the ground and stop at his feet. Harry picked a dry leaf and held it to his elbow to stop the bleeding. His irregular breathing soon settled, and Harry's breakdown was over, but he still faced something else.

What now? What should he do?

He supposed he should go back home. ...But, just because he should, surely that didn't mean it was compulsory for him...did it?

The party seemed to be in full swing again, judging from the loud noises, but there was some strangely odd ones. Thinking about it, it was probably Hayden's new broom, the Zap 3000, the best broom for young child, according to Parenting Magical Children magazine. The broom had all the latest and greatest safety features, and whenever it was flown, the broom would make sounds depending on what it had been set as. Such sounds included most flying magical creatures, and even some Muggle things, like the 'airplanet' and the 'locket ship', whatever those were. His parents had once promised long ago, to show him what they were...but they had promised a lot of things.

Harry hugged his knees to his body. Surely, someone had noticed he was missing? Someone must be looking for him, right? But, no one seemed to have looking for him at the party earlier...well, save the man trying to use him to get to Hayden, but he didn't count.

For all Harry knew, he could have been waiting there for hours, but he was only there for one. And still, no signs or sounds of anyone searching for him. The people seemed much more interested in Hayden riding his new broom, rather than the 'unimportant' brother.

The sun was starting to set, setting the sky ablaze with tones of vivid reds and oranges thrown upon the clouds. The noises from the broom stopped, and he heard more loud cracks, from the sounds of the guests Disapparating away, so the party must have ended.

Some birthday for Harry.

It wasn't too long until Harry heard no sounds at all, save crickets chirping in the cool night air, and the five-year-old began to shiver. As he contemplated looking for shelter, a scream pierced through the cold air.

Surely, that was his mother's!

Harry instantly jumped to his feet. They had noticed he was gone after all! Sure, it took them long, but...better late than never, was the old saying. Harry ran through the woods back to his home, and despite that the trail looked longer than it had when he first came there, he still made it back in about ten minutes.

Strangely enough, no one was outside, something Harry noted as he walked to the back door. He rapped on the door, rather quietly.

What voices he had heard from the kitchen ceased as he heard shuffling, probably of chairs. The lock clicked and the door opened.

Harry had either expected anger for running off, or relief for returning.

He certainly hadn't expected to meet his father at wand-point, the mahogany wand pointed at his nose.

"Oh, just you," James gave an audible sigh of relief, before he opened the door wide enough so Harry could enter.

Neither had Harry expected that. After all, not the kind of the thing you'd say to a missing child when they returned.

As Harry walked into the kitchen, he saw a flamboyantly dressed old man with a long silver beard and hair, and half-moon glasses sitting at the table; one Albus Dumbledore. Harry grabbed a box of dry cereal, since he hadn't eaten all day, save the meagre meal of toast and juice he had for breakfast.

Hayden was sitting on the floor, happily scribbling in a new colouring book. And a second later, Harry was being shooed out of the kitchen and told to go to bed by his mother.

"But Hayden's still-"

"We have something very important to discuss with Hayden. Please go to bed." Lily sounded rather stressed.

Harry reached for his small pile of presents, but he was stopped by his mother again.

"Harry, please!" There was a definite note of desperation in her voice. "This is very important!"

Harry glanced over back at Hayden, still colouring. What was so important?

Sure, Hayden needed to know to stay inside the lines...and that tigers were the ones with the stripes, not lions, who were also not pink and green...but that was going off-topic, for that couldn't be so important.

Harry left the kitchen empty-handed, and closed the door all the way...before lying down by the door, putting his ear by the crack under the door. And after a moment of listening to the adults settling around the table, the conversation began.

"Now, James, Lily," said the voice which must have been the old man. "Are you two absolutely sure you heard him-?"

"Yes!" Lily yelled, and by the scuffling of chairs, had stood as she said that. "It was one of the most strangest things I've ever heard! Especially since it came from my son!"

The old man sighed. "I feared something similar to this may have happened eventually. I do have a theory...ah, you can let young Hayden listen now."

Harry supposed they had used a spell to stop Hayden hearing that part of the conversation, before he went back to listening at the door, and by the sounds, Hayden had joined the adults.

"Everyone was going, and I didn't have no one to talk to, and then the snakie said it was hungry, so I talked to it!"

"And you're absolutely sure you understood it?" asked James.

"Yup! I'm sure!"

"My boy," said Dumbledore. "Parseltongue...the ability to speak the language of the serpents...is a very rare gift. Voldemort could speak it, and it is my belief that when his curse failed, somehow, he accidentally transferred some of his power ...to you."

There were two gasps, from the couple.

"Albus...no! It can't be! I- he can't!" Lily wailed and by the sounds, was about to cry.

Harry was completely puzzled. He had talked to snakes too before. And since Hayden had been hit by the curse, but if both of them could talk to snakes, shouldn't it have been something passed down?

Harry pondered over that, before finally deciding it would be best to tell them they were wrong. As he opened the door, the first thing that he saw was Hayden looking curiously at his parents, clearly wondering what all the fuss was about. James was holding Lily, but looked like he was about to break down himself.

"Um...I need to tell-"

"Harry!" exclaimed James in surprise.

"Vold-"

"You should be-"

"didn't giv-"

"-in bed!"

"I can speak-"

"-discussion about-"

"-snakes!" Harry finished.

Having spoken over Harry several times in the past moments, James misinterpreted.

"Harry. I think I would appreciate it if you didn't eavesdrop on important conversations. We were having an important discussion with your brother, not you..."

Not you...not you...

The phrase rang out in his head, blocking out any other sound or sense. How many times had he heard that now? There had to be another reason to why the twins could speak to snakes! But they didn't let him tell them! Obviously, Harry knew they were stressed, after all, even he knew about the whole thing with snakes and dark wizards, but he was their son! It was his birthday! He did his best to be good! Why did it end like this? When did it go wrong? What went wrong?

James spoke up a second time. "I don't think you understand, Harry. Your brother is known as the Boy-Who-Lived, and is important to a lot of people. Right now, we don't need you to be here."

Don't need you...don't need you...

Harry's young mind frantically tried to process what his parents were saying. Then as it did so, he went over the words, convinced he had heard it wrong. But, no.

He had been right earlier. He was forgotten. His parents...cared more about Hayden. Did they...did they even care about him at all?

Harry tore out of the kitchen as fast as he could, flying up the stairs to his room, slamming the door as hard as he could.

He had to go. This place wasn't for him. This was too much for him to know. This house was not a home for him. He had to run away...anywhere, anywhere, just far away.

With those words, all that had built up came crashing down. All the times he had felt downtrodden, pressure to be something he wasn't, thought to be someone he wasn't, used, taken for granted...and the knowledge and hate he bore, knowing he'd never be good enough.

Those voices screamed out to him: "Let it begin! Let us leave!"

He was Harry. Just Harry. Only Harry. Lonely Harry. Unwanted Harry.

Harry slumped against the door, empty sobs racking his body.

Anywhere, anywhere, just far away...

And suddenly, an odd sensation built up in him. Power surging through his body...and it released. With a loud 'crack'...Harry disappeared into thin air.

Harry felt like he was being squeezed painfully through a tube, and after what seemed like agonising minutes, when it had been seconds, Harry fell onto the ground.

Slowly, he climbed to his feet, spitting dirt out of his mouth. His eyes widened as he saw a breathtaking landscape, something he had never seen before.

A mountain range stood in the distance, covering the horizon, bases of dark green forming great peaks of blue-grey that stood above the clouds. Hills stood on one side of the mountains, and on the other, there was a thick green forest.

He turned around and saw white shores, and a glorious blue ocean, and large islands scattered across the sea.

And then he was brought back to reality. He had no food, no extra clothes, no water, and worst of all, he was all alone, in a place in the middle of nowhere.

That was bad. Very bad. Very, very bad.

Harry panicked for a few moments, before he tried to think logically. After a few moments of looking across the landscape, he could just

make out smoke rising from somewhere in the forest.

It probably wasn't the best idea to run towards a fire, possibly natural, but he was five, scared, lonely, and suffering from neglect.

And he ran again.

What must have been hours later, Harry slumped to the ground, his feet aching. He had been running, then walking, but never seemed to get any closer, but now, it looked like he had actually got somewhere close.

He was no expert with physics that dictated laws of speed and distance and time- he couldn't even spell physics or dictated- but he was sure it'd take him less than half an hour to get there.

Well versed in the art of moving quietly, having used it many a time at 'home', Harry started picking his way through thick shrubbery and foliage, and soon reached the source of the smoke.

Upon seeing the 'people', he gasped, before clapping his hand over his mouth and hiding behind a tree, flattening his back across the trunk, and turning slightly to peek around the tree.

There were five of them, all of whom seemed male. They were tall, long haired, and their skin was pale- unnaturally so.

It looked like they were having a meeting, four seated on logs, looking quite relaxed, while one paced up and down- seeming quite agitated- as he addressed the other four.

Harry squinted, before moving in closer. Surely a bit closer wouldn't hurt...or a bit more...or a bit more...

Suddenly, he slipped on uneven ground and fell forward into the clearing, landing in a thick bed of dead leaves and twigs.



Harry climbed to his feet, to meet the eyes of the five people staring at him. He tried to run, the one that had been standing grabbed his arm.

Harry gulped, and slowly looked up at the tall and very intimidating person, meeting his stern gaze. "...Er...hello. How's life up there?"

How's life up there...my cheap comedy skills really shining through there.

### Chapter III- Welcome Back Mr Potter

Harry yawned and reached for his navy blue bandana, securing it around his forehead, covering the scar he was none too fond of. He lazily sent a spell across the room, summoning his backpack.

He looked around the room that had been his home for the past eleven years, and today, had expired as his home. What belongings to take...

Harry Potter was sixteen years old today. Sixteen...that milestone along his age, that marked eleven years. And as the way of the societies here decreed, after eight years training and learning, he would return to his homeland, never to return.

He was currently on Cvep, the schooling island. Indeed, the island he had first landed on, all those eleven years ago. The surrounding islands- Criatt, Vlatt, Eratt and Plyatt- acted as the homelands of the people, where children lived till they reached the age of eight, from where they would be sent to Cvep for schooling and training.

This unusual system had students constantly joining –and leaving- but strangely enough, it worked.

For eight long years, they would be educated in the ways of spellcasting and the Muggle.

It was, after all, the heritage of the people to do so.

The people were called, Elumvians, a race of a thousand years, born of human and elf. Most of their history was lost to the ravages of time and death, but the most widely accepted theory was that a war had begun between the human wizards and elf-kind, and driven many elves from their homes to sparsely populated islands, all on their own- save a small group of human spell-caster allies.

Over those thousand years, the two ceased their standing as human races, forming this new race, hence Elumvian. Those pure elves of old were forever gone from the world, only existing now in myths and legends.

The Elumvians wielded staffs rather than wands- the common tool for human wizards- and children were taught both ways to wield a staff, physical and magical. These fighting skills –even though they seemed useless, seeing as the Elumvians were completely isolated- were taught in the case the Elumvians were discovered and persecuted again.

And no matter how much- or little- a child had learnt, on their sixteenth birthday, they left for their home island. The schoolmaster – like his predecessors- stressed that Cvep was only for schooling purposes, and no interruptions or distractions were allowed.

The only exception ever made in this thousand year old tradition was when Harry was permitted to live in Cvep under the care of the schoolmaster for the three years before he could start school.

The main problem for Harry, since he did not originate from any of the other four islands, he would not be permitted to move to them. Ancient laws dictated that the families had to stay on their home island, only allowed to permanently move when marriage was arranged between people of different islands.

And seeing that Harry was still a bachelor, and still intended to be for a while, it was compulsory for him to return to his homeland.

In other words, the wizarding world of Britain.

He could have lived as a Muggle, but simply loved his magic too much to give it up. Besides, he was a warrior, not some office worker.

Harry rummaged through his wardrobe, tossing some items of

clothing onto his bed. The only things he then added to the small pile were a few trinkets and some toiletries, everything else deemed to be disposable.

With a wave of his hand, Harry cast a staffless spell (one of the few things about himself he took pride in, as very few Elumvians could perform more than a few staffless spells, while Harry was able to do most spells without a focusing aid), magically folding his clothes and carefully arranging his belongings into the single backpack.

He'd given his final goodbyes yesterday. Most of his friends had turned sixteen and departed already, so it was a small occasion. A sad smile played on Harry's lips, as he contemplated the happy memories he had of this place. The schoolmaster was the closest thing he'd ever had to a father, and he was closer to the teachers than most, seeing as he'd spent three extra years on the island.

Harry sighed heavily, as he prepared to leave the Elumvians forever. He chuckled to himself, laughing as if he'd remembered some private joke, when in truth he remembered how he arrived on the isles in the first place. Anywhere else...and where else did he land, but a group of islands known as the Ehnyware Isles. He had arrived solely due to pure, dumb luck.

He chuckled. Sometimes, luck could be just damn awesome.

Harry grabbed his backpack, slinging it over his shoulder, and grabbed the Portkey ready to take him back to England. It would take him to one of the few places he still remembered from his childhood.

"The Leaky Cauldron," he said, thus activating the Portkey, and taking away from Cvep forever. He supposed it had been nice, eleven good happy years, but all good things came to an end, and now it was time to go back to where he belonged- whether they wanted him or not.

'Remember, don't let the bastards get you down,' he grinned to himself, remembering what one of his friends had told him at the goodbye.

He felt the tug behind his navel, and-

"Damnit!" Harry found himself staring at a cloudy sky, lying on his back in the alleyway next to the Leaky Cauldron.

He climbed to his feet, and brushed off his clothes. He sighed and inwardly cursed the Portkey and whichever maniac had invented the blasted things. Harry muttered a few more other curses under his breath, before he left the alley, and entered the pub.

He went to the counter, where he could hopefully get some help.

"Hello there Mr Po-...oh. ...Can I help you...sir?" greeted Tom the barman, first mistaking him for someone else.

Harry's lips thinned as he realised who the barman had mistaken him for. "Yes. I suppose you could say...I'm new around here. Do you know anyone in the Alley who's hiring? I don't have any money..."

Not an entirely true statement, but Harry was willing to bet that the Leaky Cauldron, nor anywhere else in Britain, hell, anywhere else in Europe would accept the few coins of Elumvian currency Harry had brought, solely as a souvenir.

"Oh, yes, yes, of course...I think Mr. Ollivander the wand-maker is looking for a temporary assistant. Something about a break-in and needing help reorganising the shop..."

Harry nodded his thanks as Tom explained how to get into Diagon Alley. He left the pub, and went into the alley, and counted the bricks. After finding the right one, he tapped it with his index finger, and watched as the bricks rearranged themselves, revealing a whole new

world.

Harry stepped through the gateway, yet suddenly shivered as numerous memories poured through his mind. With Tom almost calling him Hayden, it seemed Harry's self-doubt was returning, and with it, another memory from Cvep.

Harry glared at his plate. He had eaten his breakfast, and was full, but apparently, the world wasn't done with him yet. His arch-nemesis, something he detested more than the bad memories of his earlier years at 'home', remained on his plate, pretending to be innocent.

He would not be fooled. Broccoli...the essence of all that was evil. One of the most poisonous substances in existence, but to be fair, it tried to warn you with its terrible taste.

He was eight years old today! Why did he have to eat broccoli, and why for breakfast?

"Young one, you had best finish that. Your schooling starts today and you will require all the energy you can get."

Harry sighed gloomily. "Master Kain, no one's gonna like me. I'm different from all the others. I don't belong here. Why can't I just stay here and you teach me? No one's gonna miss me."

"Says who, young one?"

Harry looked up at his master. "Huh?"

"Who says no one will like you? Who says you don't belong here?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders. "...People, I guess..."

"Oh, so people say that...or do you say that?"

Harry remained silent for a few moments. "Well, it's true. Even when I was at home, everyone wanted Hayden. I'm just an extra..."

A finger hooked under Harry's chin, tilting his head up so his eyes met a pair of large blue eyes.

"Nonsense, my boy. There is nothing wrong with you."

"But-" Harry stopped as Master Kain raised his hand.

"Harry my boy, you are special. No matter what your past was, it does not matter. People were not fair to you, but that was their faults, and their failings. You had nothing to do with it. Those people are missing out, my boy."

Partially embarrassed from the praise, Harry tried to turn his head, but Master Kain firmly held Harry's chin.

"Look at me, young one." Harry obliged, once again meeting the blue eyes. "I want you to go to your school today, and be the best you can be, for your sake. Don't be the best someone else can be, be you. Work hard, to the best of your ability, you'll have nothing to be ashamed of, my boy. Nothing. And if people don't like you being you, tell them they can sod off."

Harry grinned slightly. "...Do I still have to eat the broccoli?"

Master Kain laughed and ruffled Harry's jet-black hair.

Harry sighed, stretching his arms lazily. He wouldn't go back to his old ways of self-doubt. He straightened up and put on an air of confidence, temporarily closing his eyes.

And he could hear them. The sound of war-drums. He waited, until

the beats slowed down, and matched his pulse.

Harry was quite tall for his age, reaching a good six feet. He did look rather muscular, a result of spending eleven years with Elumvians, eight of those partially dedicated to physical training.

A light breeze from the alley blew his hair, causing idle strands to tickle his chin. Harry pushed away the strands, absent-mindedly noticing that he might need a shave in a few weeks time.

Traditionally, the Elumvians grew no facial hair, and grew their hair long, usually to mid-back, but Harry simply refused to do so, only letting his jet-black hair reach a few centimetres below his chin. The hair's untidy tendency was visible in the ends, which were splayed in all directions, in almost every degree possible.

Fortunately, he hadn't inherited his (and he used the term lightly) father's need for glasses, thanks to that a quick diagnose of his health when he arrived in Cvep told him that his unhealthy eating habits were bordering malnutrition, which –in time- could have caused damage to his eyes.

His eyes glowed a brilliant emerald, almost supernatural looking.

Still standing in the gateway, Harry was ready to make a grand entrance, when someone decided to help him along his way.

"ey, move along there, boy!"

Harry turned to see a short old lady with a faded purple bonnet poking him with a cane. He stepped aside, and watched her hobble past, waving the cane at him.

"Yeh, that's right! You kids jus' get outta the way of us speedsters!"

Amused, Harry watched as the woman moved at the incredible



speed of molasses in January...going uphill...with crutches.

"Watch it people, comin' through! Take that ya scoundrel! That's whacha get fer bumpin' inta me!"

Harry shook his head and looked up at a brilliant sky. He checked his staff was easy to access from his pack, and quickly scanned his surroundings. Finally, he felt his hand rub the infinity symbol stitched into the bandana.

"Welcome back to the wizarding world...I suppose."

A short chapter, but remember, it was originally Quatreastrophe's.

If you noted Harry now has a bandana, it's one that looks like that it belongs to Solid Snake. Look, sometimes I like making references to games I enjoy.

And note...the bandana covers his scar. Does that have any relevance later on? Who knows.

## Chapter IV- An Ollivander Wand and an Old Woman

Harry had often heard of magical beasts with more than one head, and was beginning to see the uses. Because there was so many things going on at the moment. All kinds of vendors and shops, all kinds of witches and wizards, and the oddest things going around in broad daylight.

Harry grinned to himself, imagining the general Muggle reaction if they discovered this was happening under their very noses.

He looked sadly upon the Quidditch store, remembering his childhood hopes. He looked over at the bookshop, wondering if they ever did start stocking Muggle titles. He marvelled at the gleaming bank, remembering the rollercoaster-like cart.

Finally, he came across the wand shop. Tom had been correct; not only was there a break-in, but apparently a lot of vandalism. The windows were still smashed- Harry supposed Mr Ollivander had been more concerned with the well-being of his wands rather than something as trivial as windows. As Harry approached the door, he saw the handle had several scrapes in the gold paint, and the door was scarred with deep scratches, as if some beast had tried to claw a way in.

When he opened the door, a bell tinkled for a moment, before falling, landing on Harry's head and bouncing onto the ground.

Rubbing where the bell had hit his head, Harry went deeper into the shop, hearing a voice from somewhere in the back.

"Not another one!" said a stressed voice. "So much work to do, so much work..."

A man appeared behind the counter. "Ah yes, what problem do you have with your wand, Mr Pot-...Mr Potter! The lost child has returned

after eleven long years!" The man grinned. "Happy days indeed! Yes, of course you need your wand?"

Harry raised an eyebrow at the man's eccentricity. "...No. I heard you were looking for a temporary assistant- what are you doing?"

For some reason, Mr Ollivander had come up to him and started measuring his arms and tugging at his fingers.

"Don't get many this age...curious..." he muttered. "Maybe it would- wait, assistant? You're not here to obtain your wand?" The man sounded scandalised.

"No. I was told you needed some help. If you have someone already, I'll just go-"

"No! There's no need for that, lost child, here there is much work to be done, much work..."

"One more thing...sir. I'm not lost," said Harry, following Mr Ollivander between aisles, carefully stepping around or over the boxes and wands that littered the dusty floor.

Ollivander continued walking. "But you were, young lost Potter."

"I was. Not anymore."

"We shall see, my boy...Ah, this is where I was," said Ollivander, coming to a halt.

Harry glanced around at his surroundings, not seeing any difference in this mess...to the other messes.

"This is the system." Harry suddenly found the bottom of a wand box being shoved in his face. "These codes," Ollivander pointed to some gray-ish numbers and letters handwritten on the box, "go with these

wands." He held up a long roll of parchment in Harry's face, which listed all of the codes, along with the particulars of each corresponding wand. "Don't worry about the wand cores, that's my job. Just make piles of all wands of the same type of wood and all boxes with a code that indicates the type of wood. For example, HO means Holly, EB means Ebony, and WL means willow. Understand, yes? Good, good."

Ollivander walked to another area and began working on sorting the wands by core. Harry stared after him for a moment, before he shook his head at the man's crazy mood swings and odd speech patterns.

As Harry began working, he wondered if he should have asked how much he was being paid.

About six hours later, one very bored teenager was surrounded by piles of wands sorted by wood type, and stacks of boxes that corresponded. He groaned and stood up, wincing slightly when his back cracked.

He stretched, before he approached his temporary manager.

"Mr Ollivander?"

"Mm-hm?"

"It's nine," said Harry, waving his hand at a clock that hung on the wall, in surprisingly good condition compared to the rest of the shop.

"How about that."

"Yeah...so, we never made a contract, so I was figured I could leave now- by the way, how much are you paying me- and uh, what time do you want me to come back tomorrow?"

"Lovely, lovely." Mr Ollivander seemed to be fascinated with a wand

and was examining it from all angles.

Harry's eyes narrowed at being ignored. Oh, he would not be ignored any more.

"Excuse me!" he growled from behind clenched teeth. "I'm leaving! Money. Now!"

"A wonderful wand this," remarked Mr Ollivander. "Pity it has no owner..." Ollivander removed a polishing rag from a pocket and began cleaning the wand.

In most cases, Harry would have calmed himself down, but as it happened, he was hungry, tired, bored, penniless, and being ignored.

Harry stalked furiously over to the shopkeeper. "Damn it man!" He pulled the stupid wand out of the man's hands to get his attention. "I have been picking up your stupid wands for six hours straight-!"

"Hahahah! I knew it! I knew it! That wand was waiting for you, lost child! I thought I could get rid of that five years ago, but not so, not so! It was for you, my boy! The lost Potter has claimed that wand! How very curious..." The man broke off, and stopped prancing around the room in his excitement.

Harry looked at the wand, and saw a stream of gold sparks falling from its tip. He suddenly found a bag of gold coins in his hand.

"Four Galleons an hour, deduct seven for a wand. Seventeen Galleons! Have a nice day- night, lost child! I won't require your assistance anymore, may we meet again."

Harry then found himself outside the door, his backpack still slung over his shoulder, a wand in one hand, and a bag of galleons in the other.

"What the bleeding hell just happened?!" He wondered out loud.

"Oh, 'tis you again, sonny boy."

Harry turned to his right to see that old madwoman with the cane from earlier.

"Yeh got problems in there boy?" She poked his head with her cane. "Are yeh jus' gonna stand there through the night?" She prodded him again. "Well, what use are yeh?" She poked his stomach- who then remembered he hadn't eaten for at least six hours.

Irritated by the woman's poking (and poking into someone else's business), Harry caught the cane as she made to poke him again. He pulled it from her grasp, and answered: "Plenty use." He walked off with the cane still held tightly in his hand, the wand and the money now in the other.

"Eh? 'ey! Now you get back 'ere you young' whippersnapper! You give that back or you'll be sorry next month, 'specially if you're in meh class!"

"...What?" said Harry, turning around. "What class?"

"My class? Don'cha wanna learn how tah defend yerself from those scumbags?!"

"...What drugs have the folk at the nursing home been giving you today?" responded Harry, before walking away, still confused. What class was this? Why would he be taking some class- to defend himself? The idea made him laugh- and he would have done, if it would not have made him look out of his mind, laughing at nothing. So, what scumbags were these anyway?

Harry continued on his way until he found a deep alcove between

two shops. Not large enough to be an alley, but large enough to not be disturbed.

Harry cleared away the gravel and placed his belongings down. He pulled his staff away, and magically extended it from its shrunken state, and he whipped it round in a circle, putting up a basic alarm ward to alert him if anyone came near- or if anyone tried to remove the ward.

He wasn't too bothered about muggers or robbers, knowing he was capable of taking care of anyone who did decide to bother him, so Harry opted not to put up any more wards. He finally lay down on the hard ground, using his backpack as a pillow. He had slept rough many a time, and wasn't about to use what little money he had on a room at an inn somewhere. He took off his bandana and put it in a pocket, and covered his eyes with his arms, just as the old lady came hobbling over.

"I'm not gonna ben' down and pick that up boy, giv' it 'ere!"

Harry tiredly slid his arm up his forehead to look at the pestering woman, and as a side-effect, pulled his hair back. "Take the stupid thi-" He cut himself off as he saw the lady's expression. Shakily, she took her cane from his extended arm, her eyes still glued to his forehead, or more accurately, the lightning-bolt like scar.

"Oh my...oh my oh my..." She hobbled away, and a few moments later, Harry heard the crack of Disapparation.

Harry lowered his arm again, and muttered to himself about crazy old woman.

Momentarily, the war-drums sounded in his ears again.

No peace for a warrior, even an inexperienced one.

Maybe sleeping rough wasn't such a good idea after all. Harry was sure he felt gravel down his trousers.

Harry moved his arm from his eyes slightly, looking at the sun. From its position, it was about eight, maybe nine.

"Shush! I think he's wakin'!" a familiar voice whispered.

Harry discreetly slid his arm over his eyes as he pretended to be asleep. So it was his ward that had caused him to wake...he really should put an alarm on it next time, just to see the panicked faces on whoever approached.

"No, just stirring. So, are you sure it's him?" said a deep voice.

Somewhere, Harry knew that voice. Distantly, like the cry of a long forgotten dream...

"Do ya know any other teenagers wanderin' 'round 'ere with black 'air, green eyes an' a lightnin' bolt scar? Eh? Do ya?"

Damnit, that annoying old lady...and even worse, she had recognised him.

"Okay! I was just asking! Do you have any idea of how much trouble we'd get in for abducting some random kid of the streets?!"

"Didn' think you were one fer the rules..."

"Shush!" hissed the man. "So, uh...what do we do now?"

"We? We? I jus' found 'im an' reported where 'e was! You do somethin'! Didn' ya go to Dumbledore las' night!?"

"Obviously!"



"Well?"

"I'm trying to think! Okay, how about we uh, wake him up and explain things?"

Harry then heard a sound that sounded suspiciously like an old lady's cane hitting a middle-aged man's head.

"Are ye daft? He's bin gone for eleven years! He's the one that should be explaining! Where's he bin all this time? Why couldn' anyone find him? Why's 'e back now? That sort of thing, Potter!"

Potter...Potter...Potter...That word rang like a gong in his head. But that would mean.

He heard the man- James Potter, he was sure of it- approach. Before he could even touch Harry, the teen had jumped to his feet, and had grabbed his shrunken staff from his pack, and extended it to full length, pointing it straight at James' face, a swirling disc of red magic hovering at the tip, ready to be fired.

"What. The. Hell. Do. You. Want."

Harry's face was tightened aggressively, but was otherwise emotionless. His body was ready to move a moment's notice, and unbeknownst to him, his eyes almost looked like they were glowing.

And in his ears, the war-drums were loud and quicker in their tempo, beating harder with his adrenaline.

James' eyes widened in shock. He raised his arms in the recognised symbol of submission, but kept his fists closed.

Looking back, Harry knew he should have seen it coming, but his conflicting emotions about his father blinded him. The warrior in him told him to fight to escape, but the child in him wanted recognition

from his family.

Harry ordered James to open his hands. James slowly opened his right hand.

"The other one," hissed Harry, pointing the staff at the left hand.

Without warning, James opened his hand and flung an object at the ground with a quick flick of his wrist.

Harry made the mistake of concentrating on James, as James had dropped a small silver ball. The ball hit the ground, and rolled and bumped against Harry's shoe.

And in that second, Harry felt a tug behind his navel and disappeared into thin air.

"Damnit!"

Harry landed on his knees, and straightened. His eyes still were looking at the floor, seeing scarlet carpet- familiar, scarlet carpet.

The teen swallowed nervously, as a sense of dread began to fill him. A sense of dread...and a sense of loneliness. He looked ahead, scanning his surroundings.

In all this time, the Potter household had barely changed.

Suddenly, there was a loud 'crack' upstairs, and a frantic male voice shouted:

"Where is he?!"

Harry smirked to himself. Although the Portkey caught him by surprise, he had still tried to fight the magic while being transported. It obviously hadn't worked too well, but he had landed downstairs

instead of whatever room- or cage- they had prepared for him in the house. Maybe now he could escape...

Harry attempted to Disapparate, but the sensation was rather like running into a wall. The sixteen-year old swayed unsteadily and toppled onto his back. Clearly, he was no longer keyed into the wards, as James had Apparated in just fine.

Just as he was about to try and get up, for the more old-fashioned "leg it", James came thundering down the stairs.

"Who's there?!"

Harry sighed melodramatically. He lazily waved with his arm, before allowing the tired limb to flop back onto the floor.

Looked like things would get interesting...

And there we have it. Chapter 4, re-written.

## Chapter V- Yes, this is a family, really

"Fear me not," said Harry dully. " 'tis just me, your kidnapee."

Lily Potter hurried next to him. She must have been whom James had been talking to upstairs.

"Harry? Oh, it really is you!"

"Yeah, it's me," said Harry, standing up, shrinking his staff and tucking it into a pocket. "Nice catching up, but must go. Maybe I'll go to Germany, great place, if you don't mention the war. Goodbye now!" Harry pivoted on his heel and sprinted to the door.

"No!" A locking spell shot past Harry and hit the door. Harry glanced back at the couple and saw Lily standing with her wand out. James stood next to her, clutching Harry's backpack that had been left in Diagon Alley when he unexpectedly was Portkeyed away (or kidnapped).

Regretfully, Harry decided to consider his belongings as lost, and simply placed his hand on the doorknob, letting his magic unlock it. He pulled the door open and jumped out, running straight into a tall old man, getting a mouthful of gray hair from the man's long beard.

"Argh! Ergh! That's disgusting!" Frantically, Harry wiped his tongue with his hand, attempting to rid himself of both the taste and the hair, while he tried to shove past the old man.

Sadly, his great escape was interrupted by a pair of strong arms wrapping around his torso, pinning his arms.

"Harry, please listen, we-" Ah, so it was his father who was holding him, Harry realised.

Harry grabbed James' wrists – as his arms were still free below his

elbows- and lifted up his feet, and James was now holding Harry's whole weight, and stumbled slightly. Harry planted his feet on his father's legs, and propelled himself forwards and up- while still holding his father's wrists.

This ended with Harry flipping over James' arms, and sending the unfortunate older Potter into a face plant on the red carpet.

Third time lucky perhaps?

For a third time, Harry failed in getting away. He was struck by three full body-bind curses, simultaneously. While two were average power, one was certainly more powerful than the spell should be.

It only took fifteen seconds for Harry's own magic to combat the foreign influence so he could recover from the curses, but five seconds too late, for within ten seconds of Harry's body-binding situation, the house was locked down with the power of wards that generations of Potters had donated to.

As well as that, two wizards and a witch had their wands raised, carefully aiming at him, and two stunned teenagers were watching the scene from the safety of the stairs, looking over the rail at the event.

Harry easily recognised the two. The male was his fraternal-but-still-looks-pretty-damn-similar twin brother, the famous Hayden Potter. The female- well, he didn't particularly recognise her -even though he knew who she was- seeing as she was two when he 'disappeared'. Oriana was now a charming red-haired, emerald-eyed thirteen-year-old.

Harry let his eyes linger on his siblings, before they found themselves meeting pairs of blue, green and brown eyes.

One of James' hands was covering his face, holding his bleeding

nose from receiving a face plant into the floor, so it was a little hard for Harry to guess what he was thinking.

Although Harry knew what his own thoughts were. 'Hah! Broke your nose!'

The old man- Albus Dumbledore, if Harry remembered correctly- looked like a child in a sweet shop with ninety-nine percent off. Lily was torn between grief and joy, thus astounding Harry, who was still wondering how it was possible to portray conflicting emotions at the same time, as well as why she would be in grief, unless James getting slammed into the floor was much more emotional then it seemed.

"Well..." said Harry, lightly, casually slipping his hand into his pocket, and removing a small object.

The adults tensed, especially as the object expanded to form a staff. Harry casually spun his arm around, twirling the staff, before pointing it at the three.

"This is interesting, isn't it? Now how about you explain why you seem so insistent on me coming here, especially when..." Harry tapped his chin with his staff. "Ah, now I remember. The last words you ever said to me... 'We don't need you to be here.' Did I really get into so much trouble for obeying?"

Lily and James looked distraught, and Harry allowed himself a small smile, as the beats of war-drums sounded in his ears...

That was it, Harry decided. When he died, and if there was some higher deity or god, Harry was going to spit in his (or her) face and demand why the hell had he received such a screwed up life.

Harry was a fully trained Elumvian fighter, and if he did say so himself, very well-trained, better than most of the Elumvians close to

his age. Harry supposed if he had actually fully committed himself to doing so, he would have found a way to escape. But that was Harry's problem- he didn't understand whether he should get away.

The Elumvians had been more caring than the Potters, certainly, and had practically adopted him into their society, but maybe...maybe, just maybe what Harry truly wanted was his real family. Maybe his family had changed over the past eleven years, as he had done.

He shuddered at those warm feelings he was getting. Then again, maybe he should leave, and see if he could find a job as a mercenary somewhere, after all, the war-drums hadn't been getting quieter in his ears recently.

He snorted. Some warrior he was. He was fully trained, but had no real experience in the field. The most unusual thing about him being a warrior was that he had never even killed, but then again, many Elumvians lived never having to kill, as they were never attacked. However, Harry was unusually aggressive as a fighter, and he blamed the war-drums currently sounding in his mind. He had no idea why he could always hear them, but they were very useful to meditate to.

He could have been gaining experience, rather than wasting time with all this, Harry was naturally eager to learn more magic, and still wanted to see what this whole lark was about. If it was useless, he'd just leave- or run away, as the case would seem.

Harry glanced at the clock that hung on the wall, and was mildly surprised to see it a few minutes past midnight. He had been captured somewhere past eight, and then had to spend the next six hours 'negotiating' with Dumbledore and his parents, the only break for lunch.

Captured- that reminded him; he had shrunk down his battle-armour

and placed it in his pack. Had he been smart enough to wear it, there would have been no trouble in escaping, the Body-Bind curses would have failed, and he would have escaped before the lock-down.

Basically, what they said was that Harry had no chance of emancipation, seeing as he very recently became sixteen, and that both his parents were alive –and were comfortably well-off, money meant everything in the wizarding world...as it did in the Muggle world- and he had no source of income. As well as that, he had to pass these stupid "OWLs" and to be legally registered as a wizard, and be at least seventeen to legally perform magic outside of school. And then, there would be even more tests, called "NEWTs", if he wanted to stand any chance of getting a decent job and be able to financially support himself as an adult.

Basically, if Harry was to ever get away from his parents- he had to stay with them for a month, and then go to boarding school with his siblings at September.

OWLs. NEWTs. What moron came up with those names? Ordinary Wizarding Levels? Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Tests? Nastily Exhausting? How old was this moron?

And as Harry quoted Dumbledore, 1996 AD, he hadn't felt like 'mingling and catching up on old times,' so had retreated with dignity to his old room, locking the door behind him, intent on seeing as little of his family.

Amazing how fast time flies when you have been sitting on a bed staring at the walls.

Finally tired, Harry lay back, arms behind his head, and gradually fell asleep.

Harry breathed out, as well as he could in his situation.



He was currently upside-down, completely supported by his arms, which once would have buckled under his weight, but were now supporting his body with only the occasional tremble.

Harry glanced at the clock, and as strange as it looked upside-down, he noted it was ten. Harry breathed in relief and self-righted himself.

For the last two hours, he had been working out, as a sort of punishment for his accursed body clock to wake him at eight a.m., three hours late.

Three hours late. Disgraceful. That completely disrupted his schedule.

Harry was currently not wearing any shirt, displaying his sweating body, and quite fortunate that he had done so, as his shirt would be covered with sweat.

In other words, he was sweating like a pig as it realised it was about to get the chop. He grabbed a towel and some clean clothes, and left the room, heading for the bathroom for his daily shower- admittedly two hours and fifteen minutes later than he usually would have done.

Harry entered the bathroom, locking the door, and like a stereotypical male teenager, pulled off his sweat-covered clothes and tossed them in a pile on the floor, and his clean clothes in another pile. He climbed into the shower and breathed out as the hot water hit his body.

Harry closed his eyes, listening to the sound of the water, and unsurprisingly, he heard war-drums again. Maybe he had some sort of psychological problem that caused him to obsess with war- that could be it. Any explanation to get those drums out his head.

A few moments later, there was a knocking at the door, snapping him out of his state.

"Ori, get out! I have to meet my mates in an hour!"

Another voice sounded after this, fainter, probably because the person was further down the hall.

"I'm not in the bathroom Hayden, shut up! I'm trying to sleep!"

"At ten in the morning!? Get up already!"

"Hypocrite!" She scoffed. "Let me guess, you just got up five minutes ago!"

"Who the hell's in there, I gotta get ready! Mum? Dad?"

As amusing as it was to listen to Hayden, Harry finished his shower and quickly dried himself, and changed into his clean clothes, tying on his bandana last. He gathered up his towel and dirty clothes and tossed them into a laundry hamper. He'd collect them later and use the cleaning clothes charm on them...

"Hello?!" Hayden yelled. "Hurry up-!"

He was cut off as Harry unlocked and opened the door, and the brothers properly saw each other for the first time in eleven years.

Hayden was still gaping at him, blocking the doorway.

A small smirk played over Harry's face. Maybe...

Harry narrowed his eye, and reached into his pocket, as if ready to draw a weapon. Hayden stepped back, afraid- and if not, nervous at the least-, and Harry stepped forward.

Harry could almost hear his brother's heartbeat- and it was increasing- but now in the hallway, he could move past Hayden.

And he did so, saying over his shoulder: "Bathroom's all yours."

Harry continued across the hallway, hearing the door slam behind him. He waited a few moments, before he leaned against the wall and chuckled.

Hayden's reaction was near priceless. Harry made a mental note to put the fear of the devil into his brother before the month was up. Maybe he should let Hayden stumble upon him with blood dripping from his mouth- or raw meat, but that would be quite disgusting to put in his mouth.

Harry stretched his arms lazily before folding them over his chest as he leant against the wall, wondering he should do, but was saved the trouble as he heard someone clearing their throat.

He turned and found himself less than a metre away from his sister, Oriana.

Harry stared at his sister in silence, raising an eyebrow inquiringly, obviously to mean to ask why had Oriana cleared her throat.

Oriana certainly looked nervous- Harry's appearance didn't seem to be too friendly, long unkempt black hair, harsh emerald eyes, and a hardened face- and as she shifted her weight between her feet, not making eye-contact with him.

"Um...are you doing anything?"

Harry didn't say anything, only putting an expression on his face that clearly stated: "Does it look like I'm doing anything?"

Oriana blushed, either from being nervous or embarrassment. "Erm...never mind then...I was just going to have breakfast...so I'll, uh...bye!" She added hastily, walking past Harry to the staircase, but she was stopped by the sound of Harry's voice.

"Hm...what are we allowed to eat?" said Harry, approaching her. "It would be...awkward...to go through someone else's property."

The red-headed girl opened her mouth as she turned to face her long-lost brother, but closed it as she thought over her words. "...You know, I think that it would be your property as well."

Harry didn't answer, and only continue staring at her.

"Mum usually makes breakfast," said Oriana, breaking eye-contact. "But, I suppose...yeah, fine, I'll show how the kitchen works."

Oriana began going down the stairs. Harry waited for a few moments, listening, before he followed.

Harry had heard Hayden's voice as the "Boy-Who-Lived" was in the shower. And since the Elumvians opened their culture to include popular Muggle culture as well, he had recognised the tune- and lyrics from Hayden's warbling voice.

Harry shuddered. That was certainly, the worst ever rendition he had ever heard of Iron Maiden's "Run To The Hills."

"...and that's it for the kitchen." Oriana finished with a nod. The girl had lost her nervousness around her brother- or at least some of it- as she had been pulling open cupboards and drawers to show Harry where everything was located in the Potter kitchen.

"I think Mum was going to make waffles, but she and Dad had to go to some urgent meeting. ...They've been having quite a lot of those lately..."

Harry looked through the fridge, but could find nothing to have for breakfast save making sandwiches or having muffins, but at another look at the packet, he realised the words "expiry date" meant very

little to the Potter Family.

He looked over at the kitchen counter, where there was a bowl of waffle batter and a waffle maker left idly. Harry had to admit, waffles did sound good. Or pancakes. Or maybe muffins. Or brownies. He hadn't tasted those in a long time...

Harry glanced over at Oriana.

"Hey, don't look at me! I mean, I would attempt to make the waffles, but I'd prefer it if my hair didn't literally become "fiery red"." She grinned at her brother, yanking gently on her dark red hair.

"...You want me to help you make them, don't you?" said Harry.

Oriana pouted. "Was it really that obvious?"

The two attempted to make the waffles, but did so very badly. Harry was unfamiliar with cooking, save basic things that he learnt on the Ehnyware Isles, and that was all survival skills in the wilderness. Oriana was either playing around, or really that bad with cooking.

Harry wouldn't be surprised if Oriana was incapable of boiling water without it catching on fire. Water, catching on fire.

Harry idly watched steam rise from the waffle-maker, and made a mental note to tell the uh, parents to buy some ready-made waffles next time. Or maybe brownies. Harry's thoughts strayed, until they came across a fairly recent memory.

"Are you so distracted, Harry?"

Two wooden staffs smashed against each other, their owners striking and parrying furiously, not even attempting to jump out of range, for

the temporary lapse in their guard it would bring.

"No, why-damnit!" cursed Harry, wincing slightly as he backed away, his left arm hit hard with a heavy staff by his opponent, teacher and father-figure, Master Kain. "Why would I be, Master?"

"Oh, I don't know why," said Master Kain, before pressing his advantage on Harry. "Maybe, just maybe, something to do with that the day that will mark your sixteenth year alive approaches. Are you...worried about the future, my boy?"

"Worried? Me? No. Unsettled, yes. Slightly troubled, yes. But worried, no. I mean-damn!" exclaimed Harry, as Kain's staff smashed against his knee. He responded with a quick jab at Kain's chest, which was dodged. "After all, Master, it's near to eleven years. I was five. Maybe I mistook an incident. An mistake which admittedly brought me thousands of miles away to a very well hidden, warded islands containing a society of part elf, part humans, but-"

Harry cut himself off as Master Kain raised his hand.

"It was not a mere mistake, my boy. I have seen your memories. I felt what you felt. You may have mistaken some things, but it was more than incident, my boy."

Harry lowered his head, and fell out of his stance.

"You were wronged by many. By your parents, and by everyone else. They expected too much of you. Some tried to use you. You were wronged for an event beyond your control. My boy, how would your brother surviving a deadly curse make him a better person? In fact...how do even know it was your brother and not you who was hit by that spell?"

Harry shrugged. "They didn't just wander in there and pick who got hit by flipping a coin. Master Kain, they had teams of investigator,

and Hayden's the one with that scar on his palm.

"To my knowledge, you also received a scar as well."

Harry shrugged again. "The whole room was collapsing. Probably some rubble scratched my head."

Master Kain sighed deeply. "My boy, I wish you did not think so lowly of yourself. Many of us have tried to rid you of your low self-esteem, Harry, and although we have made progress, you always switch back into a mood every once in a while. Old habits die hard, you once told me. Break the habit. Your sixteenth birthday approaches, and I won't be able to guide you anymore. I trust you to make your own decisions..."

"It'll be...difficult."

"Harry, I know you saw me as a father figure. And I too saw a son in you, but that time has come to an end."

Harry nodded. "I'll change...father."

"Do well... son."

"Harry! It's burning!"

Harry snapped out of his memories, rushing to open the waffle maker and save the waffle so it could be devoured later. It had burnt a little around the edges...but it was fine.

Honestly, look at him. A warrior like him, saving waffles. He'd have to do three hours of training tomorrow.

He placed the waffle on a plate, and turned to the table, only to see Oriana eating from the plate the other edible waffles had been placed on. And there weren't many of them. It was still stunning how poor a

cooker Oriana was.

Oriana caught Harry's riveting stare and shrugged sheepishly. "Er...ladies first?" she explained nervously.

"Age before beauty, dear sister, age before beauty," Harry calmly stated, seizing one waffle and devouring it in a matter of seconds.

"A few years don't count!" protested Oriana.

The almost peaceful breakfast was then broken up again as a door slammed open.

"Argh! Ori, you didn't try cooking again, did'ya?! The place smells like dragon turds!"

Harry looked up and caught the eye of Hayden Potter.

What way would be best to terrify him?

And there you have it. Harry already different from the original Harry in Invisibly Jaded.

As for Iron Maiden, well, I'm a bit of a fan, even though Run to the Hills (and all the other songs I listen to by them) came out before I was born.

And finally, yes. Brownies rule.



## Chapter VI- The Quietening of the War Drums

"Oh, terribly sorry, brother dear, but sadly, I wasn't paying attention and burned a waffle. Would you prefer I eat it while you take a good one?"

That was what Harry said.

For a moment there, he almost sounded submissive.

Hayden missed the sarcasm.

And instead of trying to think over that, Hayden decided to try and make himself look like the man in charge.

"Well, if you don't pay attention, don't cook! They're probably all dry. I would've just called a restaurant and told them to deliver breakfast...course, just because they'd deliver to me, doesn't mean they'd do the same for you."

Harry Potter was an Elumvian, a graduate at Ehyneware Isles Magical School, one of the strongest in his age group, and nobody messed with him.

By that reasoning, Hayden was a nobody, because he messed with Harry.

Harry had watched Hayden's body language carefully, and his scowl had grown even more with everything he noticed.

A wave of the scarred hand. Rolling of the eyes. Trying to make a good facial expression. Trying to glare decently, as if Hayden could, it was an art not many could master.

Who the hell did Hayden think he was? Oh, right, the Boy-Who-Lived. Who cared?! Harry sure as hell didn't! Master Kain was right. Hayden

surviving the curse had just made him an arrogant bastard rather than anything else.

And Harry, with the spirit of brotherhood, paid back his brother by proceeding to continue with his plan to scare the living daylights out of him.

Hayden had turned away, a stupid grin on his face as he strutted towards the fireplace, to demonstrate his "superiority" to Harry by fire-calling a restaurant for breakfast.

Less than a second later, Hayden felt someone tap him on the shoulder. Instinctively, he turned around, only to see his brother right behind him.

And then, he felt himself slammed against the wall as his brother held him up with the front of his clothes.

"What the- what the hell are you doing!?" Hayden half-screamed, shaking in Harry's grip, but Harry held him still.

"Be silent," hissed Harry. It was a deathly whisper, and Hayden felt fear, fear he had only felt in the company of others he'd rather not talk about.

"I don't care who you are, but to me, you are nothing but an arrogant child. You are no one special, until you prove it to me otherwise."

The statement seemed hypocritical, seeing as that was what everyone had once did to Harry, but Harry reminded himself of two things. One, he hadn't really tried to bully Hayden, just teach him an important lesson. Two, sometimes the easy thing was so much better and fulfilling to do than the right thing.

Angrily, Hayden tried to break his brother's grip while he opened his mouth to retort against his brother's words.

Another glare from Harry, and Hayden felt his mouth close.

"I was more than willing to give you a chance to prove yourself not to be some arrogant celebrity, but you seemed determined to prove me wrong."

Harry's eyes narrowed even more, and for a moment there, he seemed much more older and worn. "Didn't anyone teach you? Respect others, and they will respect you." Harry smirked sadistically, as he dropped his brother roughly. He began to walk away, but as he got in the doorway, he turned again, deliberately so the loose cloth from his bandana swung around dramatically. "Disrespect me...and let me say this, next time, I'll do more than a light shove."

Hayden watched as his brother stalked up the stairs, wide-eyed, and the silence was only broken by Oriana a few moments later.

"Woah...he calls that a light shove?" wondered the girl.

Harry had remained in his room since that event. Hayden had left some time ago to go to his friend's place, and who knew what Oriana was up to.

A quiet knock sounded at the door. Harry sighed, hoping it wasn't Hayden who had returned early to try and have some revenge.

Harry flattened himself against the wall next to the door, releasing his magic to sense who his visitor was.

Strangely enough, instead of sensing who it was, his magic returned forcefully back to his body. Harry winced at the mild pain, and decided to investigate the occurrence later. It could be the different wards, but Harry was taking no chances.

He opened the door a crack, a crack large enough to see the face of

Oriana. Still flattened against the wall, he released his grip on the door, folding his arms, and allowed her to push the door open and enter.

Sadly, Oriana was not alone, as another red-head followed.

Oriana was silent for a few moments as she examined the room. "I've never been in here before," she remarked.

Harry did not bother saying anything, busy glaring into the eyes of his birth mother. The woman finally looked away, wringing her hands nervously.

"...It's been a while since I came in here as well. ...too many reminders, even when we took most things out..." Lily managed. That seemed to remind her that the only thing Harry had been carrying before he was kidnapped and forcibly brought to the Potter home was a single pack. "Do you have any belongings somewhere else?"

"Hm. If I had any useful belongings, surely there would be no point of leaving them somewhere."

Oriana suddenly turned around. "Wait, so the only clothes you have is the stuff you're wearing?"

Harry raised an eyebrow, unable to see where this was going. He answered anyhow. "I have three sets of clothes, and surely cleaning charms are adequate when the issue is hygiene, are they not?"

He neglected to mention his battle-armour, still shrunk down. After all, armour didn't really count as a clothes set...did they?

"Only three?!" Oriana half-shouted. Harry changed his gaze to one of an inquiring stare, and blushing furiously, Oriana apologised, and she turned to her mother.

The two began communicating entirely with facial expressions, when Lily suddenly nodded.

"Very well. I'll get my things." Lily left the room, but paused by the wall outside the room, so she was out of view from someone inside.

"Weren't you going to ask someone to do the cleaning charms for you?" asked Oriana.

"I think I am capable of performing a simple cleaning spell," said Harry, almost offended that Oriana would think him so incapable.

"Well yeah, I can do it too, but it's summer..." Oriana trailed off, noting Harry's bemused expression. "...Don't tell me you don't know about the underage magic laws!"

"Oh, of course." Harry smirked. "Since I've been missing and presumed dead for many years, I would presume I'm exempted, and I suppose the trace spells have been removed from the Ministry's side. By the end of this month, I suppose they will have placed me under the law again, but my magical signature will be registered under my Ollivander's wand." Harry stood straight, shoving himself off the wall. He stretched out his arm, summoning his shrunken staff from its place in his backpack.

However, nothing happened, and Harry pushed more magic into his spell, and the staff responded, flying into his hand. It expanded to its full size, and Harry gave it a slight twirl above his head before he pointed it at the floor.

A moment later, and the room was clean, free of dust, surfaces shining, and there was a slight aroma of lemons.

Still, Harry was worried why his magic was acting so peculiar. He shrunk the staff and pocketed it, before he looked back at Oriana, who was still in awe from the spell performed with the staff.

"Where did she go anyway?"

Oriana smiled brilliantly, showing her white teeth. "She's getting her money bag." The smile grew. "We're going shopping."

And now Harry had the misfortune of shopping in London with two women, or well, just a teenager, since his mother had been smart to enough to sense the tension and had backed off.

Harry sighed. He couldn't even try to concentrate on the war-drums, which were not only sounding quieter than usual, but since they sometimes had the effects of making him more aggressive, he might end up burning down half of Central London in his frustration.

"Try this one Harry!" said Oriana brightly. "You look good in green! And it might go well with the bandana!"

Frustration from things like this. Vomit-green. Strangely named colour, since vomit was actually rarely green, unless the person had eaten a whole load of vegetables before puking.

"Oriana," said Harry, trying to calm himself. "I think I've given you a bit too much freedom in this whole situation. You see, there are a number of colours that people shouldn't wear. One, strangely enough, is vomit-green, which only works if it is an obese person dressing up for Halloween as a puddle of vomit."

"Harry! Pleeease!" Oriana pouted. "You don't even have to show anyone else!" Her lower lip quivered as if she was about to cry.

Harry sighed again. "Oriana, if I wear the damned thing, you will stop acting like a child. And if I ever hear any comments about vomit-green, or if anyone else finds out, or if someone accuses me of being a pile of vomit, you will pay."

Harry drew his finger across his neck, before grabbing the cursed shirt. He stalked off to the fitting room and pulled off his own shirt and slid the hideous one on. The fit was comfortably loose, and if it wasn't that for that colour, he would have worn it...

Harry left the changing room and glared at his sister. "Happy now?"

Oriana smiled and revealed more shirts, identical to the one Harry was wearing, in different colours. "I just wanted to see if you'd actually put it on."

Harry sighed before walking back into the changing room.

"...I was just kidding you know," said Oriana hesitantly. "That's what sisters are for, huh? You aren't mad, are you?"

The door opened, and as she saw Harry, back in his clothing. He tossed the shirt back at her and ruffled her hair.

"Don't worry. I'll take good care to pay you back for that stunt."

"Harry!"

"That's what brothers are for, huh?"

Harry tumbled out of the fireplace. "What a ridiculous way to travel," he cursed, climbing to his feet. "You wizards have no imagination."

A heavy hand fell upon his shoulder. "Don't worry son, you'll get used to the Floo," James said.

Harry turned, shaking his father's hand of his shoulder, only letting a "Hm" escape from his mouth.

The fireplace was suddenly filled with green flames, and Oriana and Lily came walking out, not having fallen or even stumbled.

"James! When did you get back?" Lily asked, as she greeted her husband with a kiss. "I thought you'd still be busy..."

"Just arrived about a few moments ago. The uh, meeting was shorter than expected. Not much really happened."

And on cue, green flames burst out of the fireplace, and Hayden arrived.

"When did everyone get here? Just fire-called and no one was here." The green fires flashed again, and a tall red-head arrived. "Oh yeah, I invited Ron over-" Hayden cut himself off as he noticed the shopping bags, and he turned to his mother. "You took Ori shopping again? Don't tell me we're going to have to give her another room for her clothes."

"We were going shopping for Harry!" retaliated Oriana, before looking at Ron. "Ron, this is Harry. Harry, Ronald Weasley."

The two nodded at each other, Ron uncomfortable, Harry not seeming to care.

Lily dragged James away to start dinner, and by James' reluctance, it appeared Oriana had inherited her cooking skills from her father.

"So, why did you have to take him shopping?" said Hayden, still clearly having not forgotten Harry slamming him into a wall earlier.

"To ensure your new competition had suitable attire, obviously," said Oriana, poking Harry with her thumb, in particular the lean muscles on Harry's arm.

Hayden snorted, and left the room, Ron trailing after him.

"Sorry about all that," said Oriana. "Some of the girls he brings



around here..."

Harry raised an eyebrow, but inwardly, he had guessed what she was talking about.

"I'm not a fan of the gold-digging sluts he brings over here all the time," said Oriana. "So I kinda thought if he's worried about you as competition, he wouldn't bring them over-"

Harry interrupted. "I'm not fond of being used," he said coldly, his harsh green eyes staring into hers.

"Sorry...I didn't mean to. I mean...I know how you'd feel. I won't do it again," said Oriana, breaking eye contact.

And then Harry remembered how he'd been used as a child...and since Oriana was Hayden's sister, it only made sense she had been used as well. And since she was older, she had clearly endured it for longer.

"Hn. Do you want to help me put this stuff away?" said Harry.

In Harry Talk, that meant: "Fine, I forgive you. Now help me put this stuff away."

Oriana's head shot up and as she realised she was forgiven, she smiled. "Sure! Let's go!" she said, starting to push Harry out of the room and up the stairs.

"By the way, Oriana. Does your mother know you use the phrase: 'gold-digging sluts'?"

Harry watched as Oriana dumped out all of his new clothing over his head, and began folding the trousers.

"What? I hate folding shirts!" snapped Oriana.

Harry rolled his eyes irritably, and began to fold shirts as his sister began talking about random subjects, and he would respond by occasionally nodding or saying "Yeah."

Meanwhile, Harry had more pressing issues than folding shirts. His magic was still acting up, and he could swear the war-drums were sounding quieter.

There they were again, but he was sure they were quieter than usual...

"Ori! Harry! Dinner! Now!" shouted Lily.

"We-are-coming!" screeched Oriana for the fourth time.

A drawer closed behind her.

"Finished," said Harry. He walked over to the door and turned, Oriana still not having followed him. "...Let's go then before she...she decides we don't need dinner."

If Oriana noticed Harry's hesitation, it was ignored.

The two made their way to the kitchen- there was a dining room, but James and Lily saved that for when they had important guests- and they saw Lily still placing down dishes on the table, James already sitting at it.

"You know Lils," said James, noticing Harry and Oriana. "If you say dinner's ready, it's usually assumed in today's society that dinner is ready, not almost ready."

"Well, if I could get some help, then I could have had got dinner ready!" She glared openly at her husband.

"Well, if you just let us get a house-el-"

"For the last time, we are not getting a house-elf!"

Harry and Oriana watched the argument escalate, their heads turning from James to Lily as if they were watching a tennis match.

Harry glanced down at the table, and noticed that he couldn't recognise most of the dishes, but to be fair, he had spent more years eating Elumvian food.

"What's this rubbish?" Harry stuck his little finger into a white paste-like food, and withdrew some. He tasted it and contemplated the taste. "Not bad, whatever the hell it is," he stated, ignoring Lily's glare.

"It's mashed potatoes!" said Oriana. "How on earth don't you know that?"

Harry glanced over at the girl. "...Potatoes? Oh, potatoes...grow underground, have this brown skin thing that you only keep if you roast or bake them...you can also fry them, boil them, put them in stew...yeah, haven't had potatoes in well, eleven years."

"No potatoes?!" Oriana said, astounded. "What on earth were you living on? No potatoes? That's wrong. And stupid. And insane. Seriously, what were you eating?"

Before Harry could make a response, Hayden and Ron arrived.

"What's for dinner?" said Hayden, glancing over the table. He pulled up a chair for himself and was about to sit down when Lily interrupted.

"Wash your hands you two. I don't want your filthy hands all over the food." Hayden mumbled something probably offensive under his

breath as he walked away, Ron following. Lily watched them, before turning back to the table. "You too as well," she said, looking at Oriana, "and you!" She pointed at Harry. "Already got your fingers in the food! Go on, wash up."

Hayden had finished washing his hands, and Oriana quickly shoved ahead of Ron, stating: "Ladies first," as her valid reason.

Harry wondered what Oriana used as a reason when she was dealing with other girls, before noticing that Ron kept glancing at him.

"What?" he said, turning to the Weasley son.

"Huh? Nothing, just...you look a lot like Hayden. I mean I'd never thought I'd meet his long-lost twin."

"I never thought I'd see much of my long-lost twin again, but I'm not staring at him, am I?" was Harry's response.

Once everyone was at the table (with clean hands of course), dinner began, but settled into a rather awkward silence. Subconsciously, Harry even started making sure his cutlery didn't clank too loudly against his plate.

However, Hayden eventually broke the silence, starting up a conversation about the newest brooms on the market with his father and Ron. Even Oriana was involved in the conversation.

Harry, obviously, was clueless. As such, he tuned out the noises, shovelling food into his mouth as if he was programmed to do so, focusing on the sounds of the war-drums – and he knew they were definitely quieter than usual.

If that had happened back at the Ehnyware Isles, Harry would have been pleased that those irritating drums were piping down. But here, with his ...family, and after his magic seemed to be so...peculiar lately,

he was worried.

And as well as that, James and Lily kept sending him odd looks. Why, he had no idea. Surely they didn't expect him to know about brooms...so what did they mean?

Harry froze, as he felt a pain shoot through his right arm. The pain faded almost instantly, and Harry glanced at his arm. No physical damage...or at least, on the inside.

He concentrated on his magic, sending it to check if he'd hurt his arm somehow...but strangely enough, he felt a disorderly connection, varying in power, and he could barely feel his magic.

And then, the other instances when his magic acting strangely came to his mind. What the hell was wrong with him?

And suddenly, Harry was greeted by a hand waving over his face.

"Harry! Come back to Earth, please?!"

Harry almost jumped from his chair. What the hell was wrong? His magic acting up? The war-drums becoming quieter? Had he not been taught to always be aware of his environment?

Harry turned to see Oriana, staring at him.

"I was wondering do you want to go flying?"

The teen glanced around. James, Ron and Hayden were already gone, and Lily was doing the dishes, muttering about lazy husbands.

For a split second, Harry contemplated the thought of the two getting divorced and him happily being emancipated.

"Harry! Flying!?"

Harry only stood and pushed his way past her, striding powerfully to the stairs.

"...Was it something I said?" wondered Oriana out loud.

Harry made it to his room and slammed the door shut. His magic felt too strange, and he was not going to wait any longer to check on it...

He sat on his bed, moving into the lotus position. He inhaled and exhaled slowly and deeply, closing his eyes bit by bit with every breath.

Soon, a near invisible yellow aura surrounded him. His hair and the loose cloth from his bandana swayed around in the air, as if he was underwater. Seconds passed...and his eyes snapped open, their usual harshness replaced with fear.

His staff was in its shrunken state, lying on the desk. Shakily, Harry extended his hand.

The staff didn't even return to full size, and wobbled towards him, before dropping onto the floor. It rolled on the floor as if it were nothing more than a dead piece of wood. And then, just like before, another quick stab of pain went through his arm.

His hand was shaking uncontrollably, as if he was having a spasm. What was wrong with his magic? And if his magic was affected so badly...what else could it be doing to him?

And he knew that magic did not randomly decide to start damaging itself. Someone or something was doing this to him.

Harry narrowed his eyes in anger. Whoever did it to him, oh, they would pay...

Harry's back. Much more aggressive then he was in the original Invisibly Jaded.

I told you that in the first chapter.

Remember, Harry's still a rookie in experience, and hence, may not act like a correct warrior all the time.

## Chapter VII- Now, he is not average

Presently, Harry's anger faded, replaced with fear.

It was all very well to blame someone, but what if his magic was actually leaving?

Magic was his greatest friend and tool. Without his magic to depend on, what else was there for him?

"Harry James Potter!"

For a moment, Harry feared it was Lily.

"What on earth are you-!?" Oriana had pushed the door open, but stopped, looking at Harry's state. "Are...are you okay?" she said, obviously noticing his pale face, moistened brow and irregular breathing.

"Okay? Okay? Yes, I'm okay. Fine. Never better." Harry gabbled any nonsense that came into his head, his eyes still wide as he breathed heavily.

"Harry, what the-?"

"Flying! Quidditch!" exclaimed Harry, jumping off the bed. "Lovely sport! Let's go! Sounds like fun!"

Harry quickly pulled Oriana along with him, still thinking as they made their way to the broom shed.

His magic seemed to be more disconnected than the earlier occasions. Did that mean...it would eventually vanish?

Harry thought he had ranted badly about the moron who named the OWL and NEWT exams. That rant was nothing compared to what he



thought about the brooms.

What complete and utter idiot decided it would be a good idea to fly a cleaning tool? Why use a cleaning tool? Who liked the idea of straddling a broom? Why a broom, anyway? Why not something a bit more practical? Like a chair? Or a couch? Flying a couch would be saner than flying a broom.

Harry eyed the broom suspiciously. Why had he liked this as a kid?

"Harry, just take the broom?"

The sound of laughter from above made Harry glance upwards, noticing Hayden and Ron. Apparently, they were taking a break to watch Harry make a fool of himself.

Wearily, Harry took the broom. He could do this, surely. Even squibs could ride brooms. Very reluctantly, Harry mounted the broom, at first feeling like a fool.

And then, he remembered why he had loved to fly.

He lifted from the ground, bringing up his legs to grasp the broom with his feet as well, getting into a position that streamlined his body, and he shot from his hover, curving upwards until he was perpendicular from the ground.

Instead of looping, Harry turned, so he was now vertical the other way, pointed at the ground. He plummeted at high speeds, and Harry squinted, as he clung onto the broom, the wind flying through his hair, the cloth from his bandana waving crazily in the air.

And then, as he approached the ground, he pulled up just in time, levelling the broom in parallel with the ground.

He floated over to Oriana and lazily stretched. The girl was still

watching him with widened eyes.

Harry could make out a voice from above him, being carried by the wind, and floated up a few metres to eavesdrop in a more efficient way.

It was Ron. "He just pulled off a genuine Wronski Feint, Hayden. As long as he's not a Slytherin, he's alright in my book. And of course, he joins the team instead of wasting his talent...yeah, as long as he makes Gryffindor..."

And that reminded Harry, as he floated down, just above the ground. Brooms and flying could all wait. He still had to find a way to repair or heal his magic.

Suddenly, a red ball flew past him, and he looked where it had come from, seeing Oriana, mischief in her eyes, a competitive smirk on her lips.

She tossed a Quaffle up in her hand, before catching it.

"So, you can fly...but can you catch?" Oriana said with a grin.

Once again, Harry's senses had failed him- and they were in a very bad way, considering he didn't even notice the first Quaffle. Yes, something had been done to him. He was sure his magic did not decide to malfunction- so, one of the people he'd been in contact with recently had placed some block or seal on him.

But that meant...when had it occurred? Who was it? And how the hell did he miss it?

Oriana threw the Quaffle at him, and Harry only had to outstretch his arm to catch it. It appeared he didn't really have a choice now...but, maybe he'd be able to test his reflexes.

"Hey Ron, quit stopping it all the time!" Hayden joked, after the Weasley caught another attempted shot.

"Sorry, mate, but you know, kinda the point."

"Hey, time to switch! I'm on defence!" shouted Oriana.

As there were only four people, Ron stayed as a Keeper, and the other three alternated as having two people as offensive Chasers, and someone to say as a defender. All the combinations were good- save of course, the Harry and Hayden team, which was absolutely awful.

Maybe it had something to do with the fact that Hayden did not pass to his brother, as well as tried to be as far away from his brother as possible, and every pass Harry did give him, he stopped and would examine the Quaffle as if it were a bomb.

Harry didn't know how to react, that one little slam against a wall could have result in such a major reaction from Hayden.

Not that Harry cared really, seeing as it was only Quidditch. His stare of indifference- or maybe mild exasperation- met Hayden's stare of distrust- and maybe mild fear.

Ron hurled the Quaffle upwards into the air, and Harry shot up and snatched the ball out of the air, and shot away from the goals, waiting for Hayden to get ready.

Oriana moved to a position that would block Harry from both Hayden and Ron, but Harry rocketed forwards at her. Just as the two approached, Harry dropped the ball and dodged Oriana, and Hayden grabbed the Quaffle, and hurtled at the posts.

Deliberately, Harry performed an unusual manoeuvre, distracting Ron from the fact that there was a Quaffle heading towards one of

the rings.

"Ha!" shouted Hayden.

"Yeah, yeah, guys, my mum's going to murder me if I don't get back home soon," said Ron, heading back to the house.

"Yeah, Harry, we'd better get back- Harry?" Oriana looked around in the air, before glancing down, to see Harry on the ground, already putting his broom away in the shed. "When did he-?"

Harry looked up at his sister, the girl already heading back to the ground. So far, he'd estimate them as being friends, rather than sharing a family bond yet.

But to be fair, Oriana, unlike anyone else in the Potter family, probably was the only one he'd make a family bond with. The two had sort of clicked- or maybe Oriana's friendly nature had somehow worked with his not-so-friendly-and- stay-the-hell-away-from-me nature. It wasn't a romantic click, obviously.

Harry shuddered at the idea.

In the meantime however, Harry couldn't see himself trusting Oriana, for all he knew, she had been a part of what was wrong with his magic- and senses.

Since there was most definitely outside influence in whatever was wrong with him, he was sure he had to investigate his mind. After all, the mind was a very easy place to control a person.

At the island, Harry had heard some whispers of forbidden mind arts, but had never looked into them, never feeling the need. The Elumvians were firm with privacy, and invading another's mind, their sanctuary, was a great act of treason against the isles.

And once Harry discovered whoever it was that had messed with his head and damaged his magical abilities- they would pay. He would make them pay. They would...suffer.

Already, the war-drums started to beat again, almost as loudly as they had once. Harry stored that little titbit of information away. It appeared, in extreme emotion, his body began to counter-attack these effects.

Harry headed to a certain room once he entered the Potter household. One of his sanctuaries when he'd been a child. The Potter library. Admittedly not too large, but possibly useful.

He thought back to an early lesson with the Elumvians- the lesson that had made him suspect that it had something to do with his mind.

The eight-year olds sat cross-legged on the ground. Since students constantly were entering, it was obvious to tell who had been on the island for a while, some students looking calm, some panicked.

Harry himself presented a composed appearance, despite being wary of the odd looks he was sent, being a full-blooded human.

The instructor entered, and any noise silenced itself.

"A history lesson, for the fools who believe that our people should rejoin the human magicians once again." The instructor shot a hateful glare at Harry.

Ah, a prejudiced instructor who'd formed his opinions of Harry before he'd even met him. Wonderful.

"The mind. The mind is your greatest asset, but it can also be a weakness beyond any other physical fault. There are arts that can

penetrate your little skulls," sneered the instructor, "and dig out all your little secrets. That is why the Mind Arts are forbidden on these isles."

"For those curious, each island has specially designed wards that prevents outsiders from learning about the isles. Those of you who become connectors to the human world will have no need to fear about any discovering our location."

"Those wards however, do not stop your mind from being affected in any other way. There has often been the student who craves power and attempts to learn the Mind Arts. In the human world, many have learned these Arts, as they are much easier to learn about, and not as restricted. A true master of the Mind Arts can do nearly anything to a human."

"Your mind is responsible for nearly function in your body, save instinctual things, like breathing. However, some masters are capable of even doing things that you cannot naturally control, such as stopping the heart. In one famous case, a victim had his conscience and personality completely suppressed, thus making him a primitive being, relying on its instincts. And, unlike the forbidden human curse that creates similar effects, the mind arts are much more difficult to fight. Many of those who are subjected to the more, subtle powers of these arts can live on for the rest of their lives, never discovering that their mind has been altered."

"There was another case, hundreds of years ago, when our ancestors were beginning to be hunted by the humans, and one of our Elvin ancestors were captured by the humans. Instead of killing him, or torturing him, they...experimented on him."

"After all, killing was such a messy business, and who liked to hear the words genocide, so these hunters said: "Why eliminate the enemy, when you can neutralise it?" So, one master crushed the control centre of the elf's magic. And so, the "enemy" was

neutralised."

"The elf, believing he had been set free, and of course, not knowing what had happened to him, and set off happily to rejoin his friends and family."

"The problem, you must be wondering? They were fools! The master crushed the elf's way of controlling magic, but nothing can break magic away from a magical being! The elf had magic aplenty- but no way to control it! Days after, the magic flung itself loose on everything in the area! The elf exploded, taking hundreds with him!"

"The humans discovered what happened, as did the Elves. The master who had crushed the control centre had died from magic exhaustion, underestimating the amount of power he needed to crush the control centre. But the humans did not stop! They persuaded more masters, and continued experimenting, trying to get rid of our ancestors without directly killing us, lest they risk outcry from genocide. And their only means of justification was that we could hide from the normal humans, but they couldn't hide from us, thus making us a threat."

"Even I cannot- and if I knew the entirety, I would not- tell you the full extent of the atrocities committed by the humans."

The instructor inhaled deeply. "The human curse I spoke of earlier is called the Imperious, which has similar controlling effects as the masters of the Mind Arts can exert, but it takes a truly powerful individual to break the control of a true master of the Mind Arts...Now get out of my class, the lot of you."

Harry had found something, and looked at the entry.

Mind Arts. See, Legilimency, Occlumency

Legilimency. The art of reading emotions and extracting memories.

That was it. But, if that one-time instructor was correct in what he said, could this be the least of the mind arts? The building blocks? After all, a young wizard could learn to levitate an object, but as they progress in age and skill, they could levitate heavier things, hold them for longer, and eventually, move the object without the use of other separate spells.

Occlumency. The art of defending the mind from external incursion and influence; mainly a defensive technique. See Legilimency.

Ah, now this could be useful. Influence. Influence was the only thing that could have damaged his mind. Extracting memories would not influence a person.

But still, the book left out key information. Would a person have to defend their mind constantly, or only when they were being attacked. How did you tell when someone was reading your mind? Did the victim also see the memories, or was it subtle enough that only the mind reader would see it? And most importantly, how the bleeding hell did someone damage his magic in this way without him noticing?

Harry slammed the book onto the table, causing a cloud of dust to waft into the air. He moved away from the dust, still angry. His magic, mind, and senses were failing him, and the only thing he had found in his quest was an old dictionary.

Harry tried to focus. The mind arts didn't seem to be forbidden here, but neither were they eagerly studied. And then Harry realised. Not being able to find anything, not many who could use them- clearly, most people hadn't even heard of the mind arts. Maybe there was some kind of library nearby where he could find the information he needed.

He attempted a staffless spell to put the dictionary back on the shelf- and it failed, dropping the book onto the floor.



Harry already knew that very few witches and wizards could perform wandless magic, and if they could, it was usually weak and not very practical. Harry would be at a great disadvantage to many magicians his age, as he had never used a wand- the thing was still sitting on his desk, gathering dust- and now he was being expected to jump into school.

He had been trained as a warrior, and was willing to bet everything he owned that the spells taught at Hogwarts would not include battle-type spells, but would include pointless spells.

In terms of magic, he was much more powerful than the average person, and could pick up spells considerably quickly. Now his magic advantage was lost. His enhanced senses were lost as well. Why, it was almost like-

It was almost like he was being made into an average sixteen-year-old.

And the average sixteen-year-old could be as rebellious and uncooperative as they wanted, but they were still dependent on adults.

I cut a lot out actually, mostly stuff to do with Quidditch. Quidditch isn't important. That's why they always cut it out of the movies.

## Chapter VIII- What testing?

Harry left the bathroom, his hair still damp from his shower. Finally, his body clock had woken him at five, and he had been able to do his proper work-out (in the restraining space of his room) before anyone else had awoken, though the residents were probably risen during the time he'd spent in the shower.

As a part of his daily ritual, his body mechanically began tying his bandana around his head as he began planning.

Firstly, he needed to find some library nearby. And then get there and back. And then find the way to repair his magic.

That was, after all, his most important priority, Harry told himself as he made his way to the kitchen.

Lily was standing by the counter, finishing preparing breakfast, platters of food on the counter. She turned as she heard footsteps, and smiled warmly at Harry.

Harry approached the counter warily, and gingerly took a plate from the woman. She gestured to the platters. "Take whatever you'd like."

Harry filled his plate, and after grabbing a fork, sat down at the table, eating as quickly as he could without looking like an animal. After mostly clearing his plate, he raised his head. "...So, this school I'm supposed to go to..."

"Oh, yes! Albus told us about your testing-"

"Testing?" Harry's fork had frozen on its trip to his mouth. "What testing would this be?"

"To...see...wait, surely someone told you. Wasn't Albus going to explain it to you after we...uh, made arrangements for you and your

education?"

"News to me."

"He said he would take you aside...well, Albus was going to talk some of the Hogwarts professors into testing you to see what level you're at for various subjects. You know, you haven't taken your OWLS, after all, he can't just put you into sixth year because of your age. It wouldn't be fair to you if you hadn't the proper education, or the other students who had to have the testing. We could tell you had some magical education, but we still have no idea where you are at schooling standards. If you'd tell us where-"

What warmth on Harry's face turned to a freezing stare, the hardened face of a warrior glared at Lily, who cut herself off.

"I suppose he was waiting to get agreement from the professors before telling you." She smiled at Harry cheerfully, momentarily forgetting the glare he had sent her. "That makes sense."

"So...when will I be...tested? And will that still require me taking these OWLs?"

Harry was wary of his (and he still was using the term lightly) mother, and for a good reason. She seemed far too comfortable talking to him. Far too comfortable for some long-lost son who had appeared as mysteriously as he had gone. Surely, she should have some doubt about him. And, that issue of the Headmaster 'taking him aside' bothered him. It could be just a misunderstanding, or had something else happened.

Damnit, he still needed to learn the mind arts, Harry told himself.

"Any day now, I should think." Lily's voice broke him out of his thoughts. "As for the OWL testing, they should let you take them before summer ends if any of the teachers think you'll be capable of

passing them." And by that tone of voice, she didn't seem to have much confidence in his abilities. "James!" Harry turned to see the man enter the kitchen. "Did Albus tell you about Harry's testing date?"

James waved a slip of parchment. "Just arrived." He handed it over. "In three days."

"Is there a library?" Harry asked.

"A library?" James looked at Harry as if he had just said 'am I male?' "Of course Hogwarts has a library! One of the biggest-"

"I meant a public one," Harry hastily added, before James had a full-blown emotional breakdown in front of his wife and formerly long-lost son.

"Oh."

"No, dear," said Lily, turning back to the counter, missing Harry shudder at the term. "Nearly everyone around here who needs a magic book has to buy one. The only libraries are at Hogwarst and the Ministry, and neither is accessible daily to ordinary civilians."

Damnit, Harry shouted in his mind. He only had a few Galleons from his "job" at Ollivander's, and he wasn't going to ask his parents for money- especially since he didn't know the extent of their involvement in the messing up of his mind.

He could picture the conversation right now.

"I need a big ol' sack of gold," Harry would say.

"Why, dear?"

"Well, I found out that you guys have been screwing up my mind and

magic, so I've decided to buy some books to counter this. But I don't have enough money."

"..."Lily was silent.

"OBLIViate HIM!" shouted James.

Back to the subject, Harry already now suspected when this incident had occurred- and who may have damaged his mind, possibly Albus Dumbledore, one of the most powerful wizards in the world, which meant he had to be even more careful. Dumbledore was supposed to be some kind of reigning light wizard, Harry wouldn't be too surprised that the man could be involved. The guy seemed to emit weird vibes, but that could just as easily be that ...colourful clothing.

Meanwhile, Harry would simply have to bide his time. Maybe the Potter parents gave their kids an allowance or something, and then he'd just have to find some way to get to a book store. If not, this school library would have to work. Unfortunately, he doubted he'd be allowed to go the library during his testing, meaning he'd have to wait till he actually was in the school.

Once again, Lily's voice broke him out of his thoughts. "I have most of my old school books in the attic, if you'd like to look them over to revise for your testing. I'll get them!"

The house had an attic?! Harry never remembered anything like that. But- a stroke of good luck- Lily had misinterpreted why he had asked about a library. If they were helping Dumbledore- presuming he had been the one to mess with Harry's head- no reason to make them continue their efforts to suppress him.

James was busy shovelling food into his mouth like it was his last meal. The man smiled over at Harry, who took some effort to not react to the chewed-up food James was displaying.

Harry soon finished his breakfast, and was about to stand up when Lily re-entered the room, carefully supporting a stack of dusty textbooks, which she placed on the table

"Here you go, s-Harry. Some are probably out of date and not on the curriculum anymore, but I'm sure they'll suffice. After all, it isn't the end of the world if you have to take a few- or all- classes below sixth year level."

Harry nodded over at Lily as thanks and glanced over at the pile. He doubted there'd be anything to do with Occlumency, but decided he may as well look them over. He picked up the stack and nodded over at his birth parents as he headed for his room, ignoring the urge he was having to sneeze from the dust.

'You have got to be...' Harry cut himself off in his thoughts, still staring at the Herbology book.

The island he had grown up on, was generally a more tropical area than Britain, and obviously did not support most the plant life listed in the fifth year book. He was well off when it came to tropical plants, but for some of these...he didn't even know how to pronounce the names.

Harry reached over for a book on Magical Creatures. A quick flick showed he knew mostly about more tropical life, but that was it. After all, if new animals were imported to the isles, they could upset very fragile ecosystems and ruin the environment.

Intent on throwing the infuriating book across the room, a yellowed parchment fell out from near the end pages. A quick read showed it was his mother's third year schedule, and apparently, Magical Creatures was an optional course.

Harry set aside the Magical Creatures books, hoping he wouldn't be tested in that particular subject. But thinking about it, how were they

going to know what to test him in if he hadn't told them what classes he wanted to take. He didn't even know all the classes offered! Would Dumbledore have him tested in everything? Harry mentally made a note to look over the Magical Creature books later.

The next book was for another optional subject, "Ancient Runes." Harry opened the book to a random page, and to his shock, he recognised the symbols and glyphs perfectly. The Elumvians was fluent in this language, in fact, they used it as well as they used English, both writing and speaking in this. The runes were taught alongside spell theory and ward casting.

'Well,' thought Harry. 'I suppose here's one thing that I'll be doing for that OWL exam...'

Harry was then suddenly aware of loud footsteps approaching his door, which then crashed open. He swerved around, his hand outstretched, ready to cast a spell.

He then realised he was currently incapable of doing so.

But then again, since it was Oriana, things probably wouldn't have gone over so well if he had.

That was confusing. He was angry at himself for almost cursing his sister, then glad he couldn't have done so anyway, then angry he didn't have his magic, and then he wouldn't have made the error if his senses were okay!

Oh, when he found the person who screwed up his magic...heads would roll.

Oriana had been watching at all the different facial expressions, decided to speak up. "Mum says to come down for lunch. Dad says to stop being a nerd and get away from the books."

A nerd? Harry irritably sighed at these pointless words. But now Oriana mentioned it, he was feeling mildly peckish.

He still couldn't figure out why his parents wanted him back to live with them in the first place. Surely they didn't have anything to gain by it. And surely the government benefits for extra children wasn't that great.

Not in the mood to deal with anyone, Harry went down to the kitchen and filled a plate, before returning to his room, ignoring any indignant comments about his behaviour.

Through the rest of the day, the teen began skimming his way through the rest of the books. And eventually, he was sure he was ready for whatever they pulled, even though his magic was messed up.

Transfiguration and Charms were definitely in the bag. He didn't know half the pointless spells (who cares about changing animals into furniture and spelling things to do cartwheels?!) but they were probably used as training exercises. In Potions, most ingredients Harry didn't even know existed, but potion masters and makers hadn't memorised- nor would they ever- every ingredient in the world. He knew enough about reactions and properties and the instructions for most potions were in the book. If he was any good at Potions, it'd probably be in healing potions, but in the entirety of the subject, he was average.

No one disturbed him, and Harry fell asleep fully clothed, books and papers covering him and his bed.

"You have to got to be-"

"Take it!"

"It's disgusting!" Harry took a step away from the filthy shoe James



was holding out to him, a repulsed expression on the teen's face.

For the past few days, Harry had migrated to his room, going through the books- as well as trying to repair his magic. Hayden spent more time at friend's houses, and Oriana- well no one seemed to know what she did, but she reminded him when to eat, and James and Lily seemed to be busy at the strangest hours, and when he asked Oriana, she'd say something about a meeting.

What the hell were these meetings?

"It's just a Portkey!" James said, exasperatedly.

"Strangely enough I can tell. I've experienced quite a few before," said Harry with a glare, reminding James how he'd been kidnapped.

"Then what's your problem?"

"Damnit, take a look at it! It's disgusting!" James tried to push the shoe against Harry, but the teen dodged and backed away.

"Out of all the things to make into a Portkey, you pick a shoe that isn't fit for a tramp! Are you trying to give me some kind of disease?"

"Look, this is just what Dumbledore made, 'kay? Now take it unless you want to be stuck with the first years for your classes!"

"Aw, is my own bwover scared of the mean shoe?" said Hayden.

Harry spun around. "You want to be slammed into another wall-?!"

Something pressed into his side, and he felt a tug behind his naval.

Oh, whoever it was who'd damaged his mind, thus his magic, thus his senses, that would've detected that shoe a mile off, would pay. In cash and blood.

Harry landed steadily on his feet, and smirked as he saw James stumble. He looked around to see a crowd of eccentric looking nutters who seemed to be a collection of rejects from bad fairy tales.

Albus Dumbledore stood at the head of the crowd, beaming at Harry, even though Harry didn't seem to understand what there was to beam about.

"You! You're the imbecile that made that disgusting shoe into a Portkey?" Harry demanded to know, only receiving a smile and twinkles of the eyes as response.

'Weird,' thought Harry. 'Has he implanted miniature light bulbs into his eyes or something?'

"You're a maniac, a maniac I tell you! If that unhygienic shoe gives me some kind of a disease and offs me, I'm damn well making sure I haunt you."

"Harry!" James hissed.

"Now what?" said Harry, crossing his arms and fixing a smirk on his face.

"A threat I've heard many times in my life," Dumbledore smiled.

Harry was sure of it. The school could blow up and the man would still be smiling.

"Madame Pomfrey, if you would." Dumbledore gestured towards a woman who left the crowd and pulled Harry out of the room, taking him to some corridor.

"...Where are we going?" said Harry, noticing the woman was wearing clothing worn by medical people. "...Some kind of...doctor

appointment or something?"

"We have to update your out-of-date medical records before admitting you into the school," said Madame Pomfrey. "We can't have you giving people "some kind of a disease" that "offs" them, can we?"

"...You know, if I did have some kind of contagious disease from before I came here, I think I would've noticed by now."

The woman ignored Harry's comment, as they entered the hospital wing of the school. She pushed Harry over to a bed before she put on a pair of translucent gloves, snapping them on menacingly. "Since we have no idea where've you been and who've you been in contact with, I'll just have to do every test in the book."

She opened a cabinet of tools and vials...menacingly.

"...This book is small, right?" Harry said hopefully.

Pomfrey pulled some syringes out of the cabinet, and approached Harry menacingly, like a deadly predator stalking its helpless prey.

"You make these taste bad on purpose, right?" Harry said grumpily, after he downed yet another potion.

The matron was still studying a chart intently, glanced over at him.

"So, am I done?" said Harry, climbing down from the bed.

"...You don't seem to have any kind of disease but..." She waved her wand over at Harry, casting some kind of diagnostic spell that she cast numerous times already. Each time, he'd felt a strange sensation- as if something was trying to escape.

Harry froze. There was only one thing that could be trying to escape.

His magic...

The door opened to reveal Dumbledore. "Is he finished?" He inquired with a smile.

"Yes...but these readings!" She looked at them, still perplexed from the chart. "His magic levels seem reasonably large, but this other line!"

Dumbledore studied the chart. "I don't think it's anything to worry about. Most likely a fluke from some accidental magic or something normal like that."

Harry narrowed his eyes. His magic problem would not have originated from accidental magic. The Headmaster knew something.

"Come along my boy. It's time to see what you know!" He said enthusiastically, gesturing at the door.

Harry looked at the purple robes that Dumbledore wore, and made the same gesture. "Ladies first."

Finally, I've finished re-editing the first eight chapters.

By the way, Quatreastrophe sent me a near complete chapter nine, which I'll both re-edit and complete. From then on, all my writing- while still following the plan- and then I'll be making my own storyline, slightly darker than the original story was.

## Chapter IX- Mervin and Magic

"Come along my boy. It's time to see what you know!" He said enthusiastically, gesturing at the door.

Harry looked at the purple robes that Dumbledore wore, and made the same gesture. "Ladies first."

The Headmaster chuckled heartily. "Women, children and the elderly first, I should think! And, that statement should be reserved for emergencies!"

"...Right," said Harry, following the creepy old guy.

The two went through the corridors, taking a different way from the route Pomfrey had taken.

Meanwhile, he'd have to evaluate Dumbledore. Obviously, the man knew something, Harry would stake his life on it- hell, he'd stake the universe on it.

Those charts looked interesting- he'd have to ask Pomfrey about them some other time.

Clearly, the Headmaster hadn't suspected Harry knew anything about his magic being...weakened, poisoned, damaged, whatever the correct term was. But how had Dumbledore done it. How?

The mind arts were of course, the most likely suspect. Harry would have added potions and herbs to the suspect list, but he was sure Pomfrey's tests would have noticed anything like that.

And the fact that Dumbledore didn't suspect Harry to know, but surely Dumbledore would have thought Harry would have realised that his magic had been restrained- Harry cut himself off in his thoughts.

From the beginning, Harry was wondering why someone would restrain his magic, why, what was the motive? It wasn't the intention. Dumbledore therefore, had done something else to him, and the weakening of his magic was slightly expected- obviously not to this level.

Damnit. Therefore, Dumbledore (of course, if he was the culprit) hadn't had a clue what he was doing whenever he'd had fiddled with Harry's mind.

And if a man who had over a century's worth of knowledge did this by mistake...bugger. What would be the chances of him finding out anything?

Harry was still very tempted to try and trick the old man into giving some answers- or even grab him by the beard and demand answers- but wasn't too keen on that idea, considering Dumbledore was one of the most powerful wizards in the world.

And he still remembered that daydream that ended with James yelling: "Obliviate him!"

"Hey, Dumbledore," said Harry. "What exactly are these tests about then?"

"Ah, yes!" said Dumbledore cheerfully, eyes lighting up like a Christmas tree. "I was wondering when you would ask! We need an approximate level- the OWL tests, of course, would be perfect, providing you were ready for them. The staff have decided to focus your tests on the more practical side- save those that have no practical, of course."

"Sounds wonderful," said Harry dryly.

"Isn't it? I'm sure any gaps in your knowledge can be filled in later, once you are placed in the appropriate level."

"What about the subjects you're testing me on? Do I even have a choice? I haven't even told you what subjects I'd take- you can't possibly be ready to test me in the correct subjects."

The old man stopped and turned to face Harry. "You're the one keeping so much information to yourself."

Harry had stopped as well, but didn't even give Dumbledore the courtesy of looking at him. "Am I? I'm sure there's many things you have yet to tell me."

The two looked at each other, still their eyes not meeting. And suddenly, Harry tensed, his heart rate increasing, and the war-drums steadily growing louder in his ears.

Was he seeing Dumbledore as an enemy?

He stopped however, when Dumbledore turned away and continued walking.

Hayden Potter, famed saviour of the wizarding world in the United Kingdom, and as described by a certain someone, an "arrogant bastard", was staring at the space where his father and the person who was his twin just Portkeyed away.

Hayden had been intimidated by Harry days ago. Actually, scared of Harry. Scratch both those comments, he'd almost wet himself when Harry slammed him into the wall. Sure, there were plenty of people willing to take the Boy-Who-Lived on, and sure, the mindless masses enjoyed turning on him once in a while (damnit, when he got older, the first thing to do would be to get the Daily Prophet abolished and to get someone to murder their reporters) but it was weird to be taken on by his own family.

That guy- his twin brother who had been missing for eleven years-

Hayden wasn't sure to make of him.

Hayden doubted Harry had noticed that James and Lily Potter had been rushing off for so many meetings, probably because Harry had been studying, and because he was unfamiliar with the behaviour of his parents.

And strangely enough, not a word about Voldemort had been even whispered within the vicinity of Harry. Was that supposed to be some coincidence? The few times he had seen them talk were awkward, as if both sides were afraid on what to say, in case they give important information.

Hayden's eyes widened. Surely not...surely his parents and the group they were involved with (but would not allow him to join) did not suspect that Harry was in league with Voldemort?

Hayden headed towards his room, still thinking.

It couldn't be.

He may have been slammed into the wall by Harry (but looking back, he too had been acting arrogant- heck, the way Snape always described him to be), and he had been angered that his disappearance had caused so much grief to the family, but if there was one thing Hayden was sure of, was that Harry was not evil.

He had seen evil before, and Harry was nothing like that.

If the others believed Harry to be one of Voldemort's slaves, that meant either of two things. One, Hayden didn't have enough experience to judge the situation. Two, Dumbledore was too self-centred and refused to look into matters thoroughly enough.

Poppy Pomfrey was still standing, shocked. How did Dumbledore brush off such an important incident as a fluke of accidental magic?



A door creaked open and Poppy was greeted with the sight of the mother of her patient- or former patient now, considering he had left.

"Did you get anything?" Lily's tone was serious, and Poppy immediately responded, handing over a medical report to the woman.

Lily read over the report, occasionally stopping at some points of interest, until- "This illness. It's not seen much in Europe. Should be warmer climates...tropics, I should think..."

Poppy nodded. Though Lily had graduated from Hogwarts seeking to make Charms into a profession, the war had found Healers much more necessary. And despite Lily gave up her career around when Oriana was born, she still knew her stuff.

"There's something else you should see," said Poppy, surrendering the chart still in her hands to Lily. "I tried the spell four times, those readings aren't mistakes."

Lily looked at the chart. "Power levels are strong, that's good. We thought they'd be depleted when we first heard he'd been found. According to Albus' research, we'd expected Harry's magic level to be drained to a squib. To find him healthy and able to use magic...a shock! A pleasant shock, of course..."

Poppy nervously cleared her throat. There had been falseness in that cheery attitude... "I still think you should tell young Harry. If Albus has fixed the "problem" as you say he has, there really is no harm in-"

"No! He mustn't know!"

"Would you prefer someone else tells him?!" Poppy demanded, finding her courage. "Things like this always get out. And I think he'd feel terrible about being involuntarily involved with-"

"But we don't even know if it was involuntary! What if...what if Harry's working with him?"

The matron's face softened. "I doubt that is the case. The boy may be uncouth and an uncooperative person, but not to work with ...him. But...I still wanted to know what you thought of this."

Poppy pointed to the mysterious line, but Lily only glared at it. "I don't know. Probably just an error."

"But it isn't!" Poppy wheeled Lily so they met face to face. "Listen to me! I don't think Albus entirely fixed the problem. I'm no expert in that matter, but I think something went wrong. And it's hurting your son-!"

"It's better than the alternative!" said Lily desperately. "I know it's horrible of me to say so, but so much damage has already happened. Vo-Voldemort is so powerful already! We can't let him get even more so."

James watched as Harry left the room with the school nurse. He walked over to Albus Dumbledore's side.

"Do you think they'll find anything?"

"They very well may. You'd be surprised what a few good spells can do. I have a search team at the ready, but I doubt even they will be able to find Voldemort's base. I was unable to find the location in young Harry's mind- I was unable to see any memories of where he's been all this time. Wherever he has been, there are powerful wards to hide its secrets."

James stared blankly at the doorway Harry had left through. "Please don't sound so sure Harry's working with Voldemort."

"Of course, of course..." Dumbledore turned to the staff. "Shall we get

started?"

Each person present began setting up testing areas for Harry's tests. And James absent-mindedly started looking around the room, before getting jabbed in the back with a cane.

It was the Defence Against the Dark Arts professor who was miraculously returning for a second year- although, the first year may not count, since she could only teach sixth and seventh years, because of the Ministry insisting an old woman couldn't handle younger, rowdier classes, and so sent in the ugly, stupid, magic lacking inbred who looked like a cross between a troll's rear and a toad, called Dolores Umbridge.

Fortunately, they were rid of Umbridge, and the old woman was allowed to return.

"That son o' yers 'as got some attitude, eh? Filthy shoe, righ'? Disgustin', eh?"

James looked at the shoe in question. Admittedly, he'd had quite a few regrets about touching the things as well. "True," he said.

"Yeh, I'll be keepin' an eye on tha' one," she said, before hobbling away.

James Transfigured the shoe into something better-looking, something clean, in case Dumbledore decided that they would take a Portkey back. He shrunk the shoe and pocketed it just as the doors to the Great Hall burst open, startling all the occupants.

James rolled his eyes. It could only be one man to enter so dramatically.

Stupid disgusting spawn of that stupid disgusting Potter. How dare the filthy scum interrupt his vacation. He had been previously called

away to the Dark Lord, but as he returned, he couldn't just be allowed to return to his work. No, he had to test some foolish run-away brat. The twin of that arrogant glory-monger so-called Boy-Who-Lived.

He'd show this foolish brat what Potions were all about, and make this brat regret returning.

"Severus! So good of you to join us!"

Dumbledore. If he ever saw the man less than happy for more than an hour, he'd die happy.

"Headmaster," replied Snape. "I've just returned from an important meeting."

"Indeed? Any news?"

"All he seemed to do was to have a headcount of his followers. The base was secure...as it always has been."

Snape shook his head to remove a chunk of hair that hung in front of his face, but the hair stuck together broke apart into small greasy strands. James shuddered.

"That is better than planning attacks, at least," said Dumbledore, musing over Snape's words. "You should get some more rest, Severus. Why, your work must leave you exhausted."

"I get enough rest, Headmaster." Admittedly, the whole double-agent role was very exhausting, but he felt it was more rewarding to take out his stress on someone, preferably with Potter as a surname. "If you'll excuse me, I need to prepare for Potter's vagrant of a son to completely fail."

Snape stormed off, and Dumbledore smiled. "I always enjoy Severus' unique views on the world."

James turned to the old man. "Harry's right. You are a maniac."

Harry entered the Great Hall with Dumbledore, still angered. It appeared Dumbledore was using these tests as some petty revenge on Harry for not revealing anything of his whereabouts for the past eleven years.

The room had been rearranged. A long table with professors sitting at it looked like a judging panel. The other professors were hanging around in a small area boxed off by the table.

A fairly old looking witch stood up and cleared her throat.

"Good morning Mr. Potter," she stated, as if she'd said it plenty of times before. Actually, she probably had. "I am Professor McGonagall, Deputy Headmistress and Professor of Transfiguration."

'Ah, Transfiguration...what was Transfiguration again?' wondered Harry. 'Oh yeah, transforming...and stuff...'

"Since this is a highly irregular case, your testing will be a review of the curriculum taught to students your age and younger to see your levels of education in each subject taught at this school. If any of the professors feel you are capable for your age group, we will send word to the Ministry of Magic, where you will be permitted to attempt your Ordinary Wizarding Level. If you score well enough on your OWL, you may join your age group. Otherwise, the level you are placed in is up to the professor of that subject."

An ugly man with greasy hair and yellowed teeth smirked at those words. Something about him looked familiar to Harry, although it could just be the grease.

Dumbledore stood. "We will now begin. Filius?" He addressed a

small man, who toddled over to Harry...

For the past few hours, Harry had been more bored than he'd ever been in his life. He'd done practical and written tests, and damn were they pointless. For Charms, he'd been given a feather and been told to make it do pretty much everything.

When McGonagall began, he had to turn random objects into even more random animals and furniture, and had to conjure a few things.

He'd done everything wordlessly, which by the reactions of the professors, was above average for his age, but something expected for the students to pick up on.

On a more positive note, whatever affected his magic hadn't done much to his wand casting abilities, but it had to be considered that he still reckoned that the wand was still the weaker tool.

From what he had gathered, the teachers placed him above average, which in Harry's standards was okay. There wasn't much point in being rated low- unless Harry wanted to be completely underestimated by potential enemies, and being rated high was only a little side-quest of his, to humiliate Hayden once again.

Harry knew he was being a bit childish by that, but it was still fun. Sort of like drugs. Addictive, fun at first, yet wrong, and has bad long-term effects.

And then he'd done his theory exams in Herbology, Astronomy, Ancient Runes, Arithmancy (where his knowledge had been poor, considering the Elumvians preferred to use practical experiments rather than theory to understand spells), Muggle Studies (he'd hoped that the Elumvian's knowledge in muggle items weren't out of date), History of Magic (who cared about all these goblin riots and troll outbreaks?) and Care of Magical Creatures (where the rather large teacher had been sad that he hadn't been able to provide a practical

examination).

Then Harry would go practical into a subject they called Defence Against the Dark Arts, right after he did his Potions segment.

Dumbledore had left him in a side-room, with shelves along the walls, full of vials which contained numerous items.

A burner sat on a desk, strong metal wire above it holding up a cauldron. There were also numerous other tools, such as scalpels and weighing scales.

"Does it pass the exalted tag-along's inspection?" A smooth, mocking voice came from behind him. "Or do you think you deserve better?"

The man swooped around in front of Harry and scrutinized his appearance. "Ah, yes. There's no mistaking you for anything but the brother of our own dear celebrity. According to one theory on your disappearance, fame by relation wasn't good enough, so you ran away in hopes of receiving more attention when you returned." The man flipped his greasy hair out of his face and sneered. "That's what I know to be truth. Most people believe you were kidnapped as a child.

"The infamous Harry Potter—mistaken for his celebrity brother at a young age, he was kidnapped out of his own home by servants of the dark. 'How tragic,' the people claimed. 'But at least they didn't get the real one—our real savior,' they sighed in relief." The man sneered again as he got ready to wrap up his narration. "And then they all forgot. The end."

Harry was split into two. One half of him wanted to wonder why was this odd man making some stupid tale, while the other half of him wanted to tell the odd man to get a life. Harry did neither, and kept his mouth shut. Wisely.

"I am Professor Severus M. Snape-"

"What does the M stand for?" interrupted Harry.

"That is not your business!" thundered Snape.

"Oh come on...Mark. Marcus. Margaret. Meryl. Mordor. Marvi- no, Mervin."

Snape paled.

"It's true?" said Harry, before sniggering. "You're Severus Mervin Snape?"

"Shut up!"

"Okay...Mervin."

Snape tried to keep his cool, as he reached into his robes and removed several pieces of parchment. "Spawn of Potter, this is your test. Identify all ingredients in this room, and then prepare this potion." Snape handed him one piece of parchment that had nothing but numbers 1-50 down the side, and another piece that had instructions to prepare some sort of healing potion. "You have one and a half hours. Begin!"

Snape dramatically stormed out of the room without another word or a single glance back at his (potential) future student. Harry remained still, wondering at the strange man's abrupt story, brief instructions, stupid middle name, and sudden departure. He looked at all of the vials in the small area and sighed. Every single one was labelled with nothing but a number.

"Aw, sh-"

Snape paced around the desk in circles, his eyes never leaving the



cauldron full of whatever Harry had made.

The Potions Professor came to a stop. "It is acceptable," he announced. Harry raised an eyebrow, from what he'd seen of the professor, he'd rather die than give Harry a good grade- "for a moronic third year. I won't have you in any higher level class than that."

Harry's mouth fell open. Yeah, the potion was probably poor, but he'd bet a fortune that the average third year wouldn't do better.

"Got something you wish to say, Potter?" spat Snape.

"As a matter of fact, yes," said Harry.

In the future, he'd look back and wonder where he got the courage from.

"I'd like to tell you to go and get a life, Mervin."

It was Snape's turn for his mouth to fall open, and Harry took that as his cue to leave. As he made his way back to the Great Hall, he saw Dumbledore pulling aside an angry, no scratch that, furious Snape.

Looks like the guy could dish them out but couldn't take them.

"So, my boy, it appears you are more advanced than we originally thought," said Dumbledore cheerfully. "Just one subject left. Defence Against the Dark Arts."

"Yay," cheered Harry mockingly.

Dumbledore continued on as if there had been no interruption. "This task will be more...draining than any other task."

"What's the task?" asked Harry cautiously.

"A survival task," said Dumbledore.

"...What?" said Harry.

"A survival task, Harry," said Dumbledore. "Set against a multitude of magical creatures. Good luck!" Dumbledore hurried to the "judges table" with the other teachers, and suddenly, a (most likely magical-creature-proof) glass wall appeared around them. The doors to the Great Hall opened, and Harry was treated to the sight of an Acromantula.

"One by one!" shouted Dumbledore through a hole that had appeared in the glass. "If it seems you are in a life-threatening situation, you will be rescued!"

"You've got to be-"

The Acromantula belted across the ground, all eight legs working furiously.

Harry drew his wand and carefully aimed. 'Abrumpo!' he thought, as he fired the spell, hitting a leg dead on.

The spell severed the leg, and the Acromantula crashed to the ground. Harry sent a few more spells to ensure it could not get up, before he pointed the wand at its eight eyes.

His curse blew through the giant spider's head, leaving a disgusting corpse in the hall.

"Don't people eat in here?" remarked Harry dryly.

"You were supposed to incapacitate it, not kill it," said Dumbledore.

"Dictionary definition. Incapacitate refers to depriving something of

effectiveness, or putting it out of action. I've done just that, incapacitation in a slightly more extreme way," yawned Harry. "So, is that all?"

"Next!" shouted Snape, furious that the Acromantula hadn't killed Harry.

The doors opened again, and this time, a mountain troll entered.

"Where exactly are these things coming from?!" said Harry. "And is this even legal?! I'm sure this isn't on the sixth year curriculum!"

"A few years ago, two first years incapacitated a mountain troll, this should be easy!" said Dumbledore, as if he was telling Harry to just do some addition.

The troll stumbled forwards. It was unarmed, but a punch would still probably crack Harry's skull.

'Dumbledore sure has twisted ways of payback if you don't tell him something,' Harry thought, before aiming at the troll's head, small compared to the rest of its body.

'Aim for the eye...'

A well aimed Reducto destroyed one of the troll's eyes.

As the troll thrashed around furiously, Harry took his chance to set the troll's loincloth on fire.

The teen turned away. There were some things in life he never wanted to see, and a troll frantically trying to pat out its burning loincloth was one of those things.

"Is that considered incapacitation?"

"Right so that's...one Acromantula, a cave troll, a Red Cap, some sort of magic octopus," Harry continued listing the numerous creatures he had either incapacitated or killed. "And I haven't got one scratch on me. I guess that means I get full marks?"

Dumbledore nodded dumbly, either in shock or having a senior moment.

"Well, I suppose that's it, then?" said Harry.

"Yes, yes," Dumbledore said, as the glass walls vanished, "Your results will be sent over to you tomorrow."

"What's the point?" said Harry. "It's best to get them sooner, otherwise I might not be able to do these OWL exams or whatever."

"Very well." Dumbledore handed an envelope to James who was approaching Harry with his new shoe in hand.

"Here," James said shortly, holding out the shoe.

"Ah, a better-looking shoe...this is just that old one Transfigured, isn't it?"

Not in any mood to deal with this, James darted forwards and once again, pressed the shoe into Harry's side.

Harry felt a familiar tug behind his naval as he was whisked through the air...

Harry landed on his rear, rubbing his arm. He hadn't landed on it, but for some reason, it had been paining since mid-way through the tests. And that Portkey seemed to have aggravated it.

"Here's your results by the way," said James, handing over the envelope.

Harry opened it, still scowling at James until the older man backed off a little.

### Subject Testing of Harry Potter

Arithmancy- Average knowledge, third or fourth year rank. Not prepared to take an OWL.

Ancient Runes- Ready for OWL.

Herbology- Ready for OWL.

Muggle Studies- Ready for OWL.

Charms- Ready for OWL.

Potions- Around fourth or fifth year knowledge. Not prepared to take an OWL.

Transfiguration- Ready for OWL.

Defence Against the Dark Arts- Ready for OWL.

History of Magic- Third or fourth year knowledge. Not prepared to take an OWL.

Care of Magical Creatures- Around fourth or fifth year knowledge. Not prepared to take an OWL.

Astronomy- Ready for OWL.

"That's it?" said Harry. "He could've just told me."

James took the paper. "I suppose you'd get ready for your OWLs."

"Great, more studying," muttered Harry. "On a positive side, I don't have to see much of you."

"What was that?"

"Nothing," said Harry, as he rubbed his arm, as he felt another surge of pain rise.

"Something the matter?" asked James, looking at Harry.

"No, I'm fine, I'm fine- argh!" Harry howled as he collapsed to his knees, his left arm feebly clutching his right, pain uncontrollably shooting through his arm.

The pain spread, and soon enough, Harry was convulsing, his entire body in pain.

"Harry, what's the matter?!" shouted James.

The door was suddenly pushed open to reveal the youngest of the Potter family. "I thought I heard-" Her eyes fell upon her brother, his body uncontrollably in spasms. "Harry!"

"Get back Oriana!" shouted James, as he stooped to Harry lay, and began casting a Diagnostic Spell, but it only seemed to cause Harry more pain.

"But-!"

"I said get back!"

Oriana frantically considered what to do, before rushing over to the fireplace and fire-calling Hogwart's Hospital Wing...

"In the meantime, I should recommend that he have plenty of bed rest," suggested Poppy Pomfrey.

Harry was lying on his bed, semi-conscious, under the influence of concussion- having hit his head during his spasms, while James and Lily worryingly looked on.

"In the meantime, I would like to speak to you two, outside," said Pomfrey, practically whispered.

The two nodded and left the room, closing the door behind them.

Harry's eyes snapped open. 'Good thing I know how to fake concussion,' he thought, as he climbed out of bed as quietly as possible.

He snuck across the floor, taking good care to avoid any creaky floorboards, or anything that would give him away. Once he'd reached the door, he concentrated what little of his enhanced hearing he had, and began to eavesdrop on the three.

"There really is a serious problem with his magic!" urged Pomfrey, as quietly as possible. "Listen to me, what Albus did- it must have gone wrong!"

Harry congratulated himself silently. He was right. It was Dumbledore.

"And it's causing your son terrible pain!" said Pomfrey.

"But, it's still better than the alternative!"

"Snivelly has reported that he's started looking weaker when he calls his thugs around for a meeting," said James.

"Yes, but-" Pomfrey was cut off.

"It's not like we're not going to try and find some other way of

stopping it, that doesn't cause Harry pain!" said James. "But in the meantime, it's all we've got."

Pomfrey was silent for a moment. "Still, I think you should tell him."

"But still, Harry might be working with him!"

"Yes, but think of the boy's mental state! What if he snaps! What if Oriana and Hayden get hurt!"

"Won't happen," said James confidently.

"What makes you so sure?"

"Well, Harry sort of slammed Hayden into a wall the other day. Oriana was laughing about it and told me provided Harry didn't get in trouble. So, I put up a couple of wards that'll stop any, violence against family. I didn't tell Hayden or Oriana though, if that's what you're thinking."

"Well, what if he decides to run away...again?!" demanded Pomfrey.

"Won't happen," said James confidently. "Dumbledore put up some wards-"

"You can't just keep putting up wards! He's practically a prisoner in his own home!"

There was a tense silence, and a sigh. "Look, we'll do our best, right? I'll talk to Dumbledore and tell him to put up some wards- that was a joke!" said James, seeing the two faces stare at him incredulously. "I'll ask him to try and find another way."

"Poppy, can you tell Albus about this?" asked Lily.

"Very well..."



The voices began to fade away, and footsteps were heard going down the stairs.

Harry paced across his room, furiously thinking.

So he was helpless. And what could a helpless person do against those with power? So he was stuck, probably going to have to stay in this room reading until whatever happened.

His magic had problems that involved him feeling pain and went into spasms. His physical abilities were useless, considering all the wards that had been put up- Harry had a feeling James had neglected to mention all the wards- and even if he'd escape, it'd probably take the simplest of tracing spells to find him.

This confirmed his theory that Dumbledore had been intending to do something else, that had screwed his magic up as a side-effect.

And what exactly had he been intending to do? And who was this someone who had been getting weaker, and had thugs? And this Snivelly, was he a spy? Was Snivelly some sort of codename?

But the most important thing was...he felt helpless. Weak.

His vision suddenly tinted red as he felt an uncontrollable wave of anger charge through him.

His magic, it was there! He felt powerful!

He roared, and smashed his fist into the wall, furious at it, furious at his parents, furious at anyone and anything...

And Harry was suddenly aware of pain, a fist-shaped dent in the wall, and his magic turning back to the weak form it had become.

The door opened.

"Harry, mum and dad told me to see if you were awake-" Oriana froze as she saw Harry's face.

Eyes that were ablaze, a madman in his gaze.

With a frightened squeak, Oriana slammed the door shut, and ran back downstairs, fear that she had never felt before present in her.

Harry fell to a knee, a grin on his face. From what just happened, he'd guess that whatever Dumbledore had done, the old man's mumbo-jumbo seemed to not work when he was in periods of intense emotion.

Finally, a clue. A clue that would provide him...his power.

AN:

Ah, an end. With cliff hangers too.

Well, so there you have it. Dumbledore ain't some crazy magic binder, he's just screwed up. 'cos when it's Dumbledore, I always assume him as "Good but Misguided." You know what they say, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions."

As for Hayden, no, I'm not redeeming him, that was some character development planned by Quatreastrophe. I'll find some use for the guy...maybe.

And as for Severus Mervin Snape- yeah, that's a reference to "Robin Hood Men in Tights."

Got anything you want to point out to me, or bitch about Harry? Feel free to review.

## Chapter X - Finding the Answers

A week had passed since Harry's breakdown. Since then, he had still been fearing that he was about to emotionally collapse.

The suspense was killing him, almost literally. Who was this person that they sought, this one who was being weakened by Harry's pain.

Harry could not even stand to be in the same room as his "family." James and Lily, although they wanted to find an alternative to Harry's pain, still felt that it was more important to weaken some other. Even though it was weakening Harry as well.

Hayden was still probably scared of Harry, and judging by the state Oriana found him in, she most likely was as well.

Harry had fallen into a simple routine. Wake. Work out. Shower. Breakfast. Read. Lunch. Read. Dinner. Read. Sleep. Wake- and it continued.

By waking at five, and turning in at eleven, and starting to spend far too many hours in the house, (there were sometimes a few half-hearted attempts by his siblings to get him outside to play a bit of Quidditch, but Harry always shot them down) Harry had developed dark circles around his eyes, plus paler skin.

Harry snorted to himself. In poor light, he'd probably look a bit like Mervin.

However, his breakdown had done one thing for him. That anger had been replaced with a cold maturity. Harry was fully aware shouting or screaming wouldn't do anything for him.

A sharp tapping at the door broke him out of his routine.

"Harry?" It was Lily. "Are you ready yet?"

The first day of OWL testing was already there. Harry didn't even know why he cared, studying for these pointless exams.

Ah yes, now he remembered. Studying was the only thing that had kept him busy, the only thing that had stopped going insane over the past few days.

Harry grabbed a coat, before opening the door and striding past his mother without sparing her a word or glance as he walked downstairs to the Floo, stopping only to adjust his bandana.

Moments later, Harry, James and Lily were in the Ministry of Magic, the latter two brushing ash off their robes, Harry neither caring nor wearing robes, opting for ordinary clothes.

After receiving a wand-check, and an elevator ride, Harry found himself in a fairly large room, with a few desks and chairs set up.

The examiner, a fairly bored-looking middle aged man, reminded Harry on his exam timetable.

"Muggle Studies and Charms today, Herbology and Transfiguration tomorrow. You will then be given a free day, for you will have three exams the day after, Ancient Runes, Astronomy and Defence Against the Dark Arts," said the examiner dully. "The Muggle Studies exam composes of a written paper, while the Charms exam includes a practical portion will be supervised by another examiner."

The examiner placed down the paper in front of Harry. "You have ninety minutes for this exam. You may begin."

Harry wrote his name on his answer paper, before looking at his first question...

"Now, I'd like you to conjure a rock, levitate it and spin it around in the

air," said the examiner.

Several gruelling hours later, Harry had completed both written papers, and was half-way through his Charms OWL, which seemed to be composed of the same pointless questions his tests at Hogwarts had been made up off.

Harry raised his wand, conjuring a rock wordlessly, as usual. And suddenly, a burst of pain shot up his arm, and he grabbed it, dropping the rock and his wand, wincing in pain.

"Is something the matter?" said the examiner, looking worriedly at Harry. "If you feel ill, Mr Potter, we can take a short break-"

"No, no, I'm fine," said Harry through gritted teeth, picking up his wand and levitating the rock, before starting to spin it.

The pain attacks were getting more and more frequent. It didn't matter, he told himself. All he had to do was wait till he got to Hogwarts, and there were bound to be either some book that could help him, or maybe a magical prodigy who had experience with the mind arts.

"Very well, now, change its colour and enlarge it..." continued the examiner, still looking curiously at Harry.

Fortunately, Harry's resolve forced away the pain for the moment, and he continued the rest of his Charms practical without any more incidents.

Harry had been expecting to see James and Lily, waiting for him. He didn't expect to see Hayden, who was still looking rather nervous.

"What are you doing here?" said Harry, not even bothering to hide his dislike.

"Oriana went to visit a friend, and mum and dad had some sort of meeting," said Hayden, not meeting Harry's eyes. "I've got a Portkey to take us back...do you want to go and get something to eat first?"

"And they trust me to go alone with you?" said Harry, genuinely surprised.

Hayden shook his head. "I wouldn't think so. I reckon we're being watched."

Harry scanned his environment, as discreet as possible. There were many people around, considering it was the Ministry of Magic, but Harry knew there was something out of place. He was actually surprised that Hayden had picked up on it.

"...Isn't this a bit much?" remarked Harry, as the two headed over to the Floo points.

Hayden shrugged. "Yeah, but there could be Dark wizards and all, you know..."

"There are?"

"Yeah," said Hayden, amazed that his brother apparently knew nothing about Voldemort. This confirmed Hayden's theory that Dumbledore was keeping Harry in the dark, as it were, but Harry could just be a good actor.

Hayden changed the subject, back to where they should get lunch. "So, Leaky Cauldron?"

Harry shook his head. "How about a Muggle place?" he said, not out of preference, but then it would be easier to tell if they were being watched by wizards.

Less than an hour later, the two were in Central London, sharing a

Pizza Hut take-away, and Harry had confirmed to himself that they were being watched. By about four people. Not a problem to get away if all his magic was functioning correctly, but now, Harry knew he most likely was no match for them, and anyway, Harry wouldn't have run away, considering his Elumvian staff was still back at the 'old Potter house'.

He'd rather befriend Hayden than leave his staff behind.

"So, how were your OWLs?" said Hayden, as he finished a slice of pizza.

"Fine," said Harry, as he idly chewed at his slice.

"I heard that you weren't going to be taking an OWL in Potions."

"...So?"

"Well, you won't be escaping Snape that easily," said Hayden, and when Harry raised an eyebrow, Hayden continued. "Dad told me that Snape's going to be taking over DADA for the NEWT class, and I heard you're doing an OWL in that as well."

"Snape? You mean Mervin?"

"Mervin?"

"It's his middle name," said Harry, seeing no harm in informing Hayden of this.

Hayden sniggered. "Great, I finally have a way to get at that bastard for all those years of hell he gave me, not to mention those bastardly Occlumency lessons last year-"

"What?" said Harry. "Did you say Occlumency?"

"Er, yeah..." said Hayden. "Occlumency is stuff like-"

"Defending the mind, I know about it," said Harry hastily. "So, you say Mervin gave you lessons in it? What did he do?"

Hayden snorted. "Lessons my arse. All he did was shout at me, "Clear your mind," and then use that Legilimens spell on me. I don't even know why Dumbledore randomly decided I should have Occlumency lessons..."

"Clear your mind? Something to do with emotions, right?" Harry probed for more information.

"He didn't even explain what clearing your mind meant!" Hayden continued his rant. "Just would go, clear your mind before you go to sleep, hide your memories and emotions, and just repeated that on a regular basis..."

"Sounds terrible," Harry changed the subject, sensing he'd learn no more.

Hayden wolfed down the last slice of pizza. "What'd you reckon?" he managed after he swallowed the last bit of the crust. "Head home, or grab a drink first?"

Harry shrugged, before rubbing his arm. The pain was still there. "You pick," he said, still concerned with his arm.

"You okay?" said Hayden, watching Harry. "You've been rubbing your arm a lot." Apparently, after sharing a pizza, Hayden wasn't as scared of Harry as he had been. Probably would mean that Harry would have to go back to putting the fear into him.

"It's nothing," said Harry.

"Fine, let's find an alley or something," said Hayden, turning around.



"What?" said Harry, still cradling his arm.

"Well, you know," Hayden whispered. "We can't use a Portkey in front of all the Muggles!" "Yeah, yeah..."

The two found an empty alley and Portkeyed away, back to the old Potter House.

Once they landed (Harry landing uncomfortably on his back), Harry climbed to his feet and headed to his room. He had already scoured the house for any books that could help him, and so decided he may as well go back to revising for his OWLs.

He picked up a book, but when he felt another jolt of pain surge through his arm, he fell onto his bed, opting to rest until the pain left... he felt tired so much easily nowadays, due to both his magic problem, and that he was catching so many little hours of sleep.

"Oriana, where's Harry?" asked Lily concernedly.

It was now evening, and the Potters were sitting down to Harry. It had fallen into a rota where Oriana was the one to fetch Harry down for meals, and although she had seen his breakdown several days ago, she did so without a word.

"He's asleep," said Oriana. "I..didn't want to wake him."

"I'll just put something in the fridge for him if he wakes and feels hungry," said Lily, as she sat at the table.

The Potters ate in silence. Usually they would talk about something, be it Quidditch, or maybe how their day was like. Now, since Harry was on their minds, none of them could speak up.

Hayden broke the ice. "...Mum, Dad, is Harry like, sick or something?

He kept holding his arm like he was in pain or something..."

Lily and James exchanged looks. "I haven't noticed anything," said Lily. "...Oriana, have you noticed anything?"

Oriana squirmed under the gazes she was receiving. "W-Well, nothing much..."

"What's 'nothing much'?" asked James.

"Well..." Oriana gulped, before resolving herself to tell. "A couple of days ago, you know when you asked me to check on Harry to see if he still had concussion...I opened the door and I saw..."

"What happened?" asked Lily, curious to what seemed to have shaken up her daughter so.

"It was Harry...but at the same time...not him." Oriana knew from the faces staring at her, no one understood. "He just seemed so...angry. Insanely angry...he'd punched a dent in the wall."

No one spoke again for the rest of the dinner, wondering what it was that had brought Harry to such anger. However, it hit the parents when Oriana and Hayden had finished and gone upstairs.

"Lily..." said James. "You don't think Harry heard us talking with Pomfrey about-"

"He had concussion, remember?" said Lily, not looking at James, as she waved her wand at the dishes, which began magically cleaning themselves.

"Oh, any fool can fake concussion!" snorted James. "I used to do it all the time, like back in seventh year, you know with the accident and you- er...sorry..." James cut himself off as Lily furiously turned on him, and remembered he'd never told Lily that he'd faked his

concussion.

"The point is, what if he did hear?" said James. "Sure, there are loads of other things that it could have been, but you heard Hayden, he's still in pain! Maybe we should just get Dumbledore to undo it-"

"James, you know what'd it mean!" said Lily. "Their attacks are already down by about eighty percent!"

"Yeah, but...I mean, Pomfrey's right. Look at the pain he's going through, it should be our duty as parents to look out for our kids, and-"

"Some of the Order assigned to it have already found something that could help! They're looking into something that'd stop the pain!"

There was a pause. "You're serious?" asked James.

Lily nodded furiously. "Do you think I enjoy Harry's pain, James? It's why I told Dumbledore to put as many on it as he could spare! You see, apparently, his pain looks like a symptom of-"

The two continued their talk in the kitchen, disagreeing on many things, before giving up their conversation.

Harry grabbed his arm, again. The pain seemed to be getting even worse...

"Something the matter?" Fortunately, there was a different examiner.

Harry shook his head and went back to Transfiguring the racoon in front of him. He had of course, already completed his Herbology tests and his Transfiguration written exam.

The pain was starting to become unbearable, and Harry was beginning to fear whether it would start to have more effects. What if

the pain stopped his breathing? What if it affected his brain?

Couldn't tell anyone about it, could he?

And he couldn't run away to get help, in his state even the stupidest of wizards could track him down and forcibly bring him back.

Harry winced in pain again as he turned the racoon into a chair and then into a fox. He glanced over at the clock that hung on the wall.

'Only twenty minutes left...come on Harry, stay focused...'

"Will you just come out and say it?" snapped Harry irritably.

It was the morning of the free day. Harry had expected to stick with his routine, and for some reason, Lily and James had called him down and began making various small-talk.

James, the one in the relationship who had no idea of subtle, decided to just come out and say it. "Well, since Oriana and Hayden are going out to see friends, and me and your mother-

"Your mother and I," corrected Harry.

"Whatever," said James, dismissing the correction. "So, we figured you best be with someone, because you're a teenager and no adult in their right mind would leave a teenager to their own devices."

Lily smacked her forehead with her palm, sighing at her husband's ...attitude.

"...So I'm going to go visit someone or something similar?" said Harry. Something told him it would most likely be a skilled wizard under Dumbledore's thumb, capable of fully tracking him and stealth, not to mention being subtle and intelligent-

"You're going to spend the day with Sirius and his kids."

Harry blinked. He had little memories of Sirius, but he knew the man was anything but subtle and intelligent. Then something James had said came back to him. "Wait...kids?"

"Oh yeah," said James. "I forgot you wouldn't know anything about that. Well, about a year after you uh, well, you know-"

"Vanished? Ran away? Get a move on," said Harry.

"Sirius got married. And a year after that, his wife gave birth to twins, but she died giving birth," said James, a pained expression coming over his face. Apparently this had stirred up sad memories.

"...Wait, twins? There are three of them?"

James nodded cheerfully. "The twins are eight. Orion and Lyra."

"...Please say they're not like Sirius."

James rubbed the back of his head nervously. "Well, I suppose I could, but then I'd be lying."

"Kill me!" screamed Harry. "Kill me now!"

"Harry! Get back here!" shouted the twins, and Harry continued running.

If he was given the option to stay with these twins, or have his magic stripped away by Dumbledore and becoming Mervin's potion assistant, then he'd say "better check my cauldron isn't rusty."

Sirius chuckled as he read through the Daily Prophet, or more precisely, drawing on the faces of people he didn't like. He'd given Fudge (the former Minister of Magic) a Hitler moustache, as they

were now called, and the moving picture didn't seem to be very happy by the massive ink square affixed to its face. Lucius Malfoy had received an even worse treatment that could have him considered to be an Mr.T impersonator.

Sirius chuckled again as he heard another of Harry's cries. The teen was getting so well with Orion and Lyra.

The clock chimed twelve, and Sirius lifted himself out of his armchair. "Lunchtime!" he yelled, causing the twins to stop running after Harry, who sighed in relief, but not when the twins started dragging him to the kitchen.

Contrary to popular belief, Sirius was a reasonably good chef. He'd made it a goal to learn when he'd heard women love guys who can cook.

Within five minutes, Sirius had whipped up lunch, using magic to levitate it over to the dining table, where Orion and Lyra sat either side of Harry, who looked on the verge of having a seizure.

"Smile more Harry!" chirped Lyra, grabbing onto the loose cloth from Harry's bandana.

Angrily, the teen tugged it from her grasp. He could understand that they were children, and admittedly, Harry was more fond of children than he let on, it being his only goal for later life to one day have a family (and certainly not have favourites or neglect any of his kids), but Harry was sure of one thing, and that was no one touched his bandana.

For Harry, that simple navy-blue cloth that was tied around his forehead was sacred property.

Meanwhile, Lyra was busy looking as hurt as she could, trying to make her eyes as big as possible while she made a sad expression

on her face.

Orion was doing the same thing, but clearly hadn't mastered it as well as Lyra.

And for some reason, Sirius had joined in, and that was just scary.

"Please Harry," said Lyra, as cutely as possible. "Pleeeeeeease?"

"Fine!" growled Harry, as he untied his bandana and handed it to the little brat. "I want that back though."

"Oh, you can have it," said Lyra. "I only asked-"

"because we-" said Orion.

"wanted to-"

"see how-"

"resilient you were-"

"To the incredible persuading powers of the Black Twins!" the two cried out in unison, each thrusting a fist into the air.

Harry slowly took his bandana back, tying it around his forehead as he frantically tried to remain sane.

"So, Harry," said Sirius, now his entertainment had ended. He took a seat opposite of Harry, and the teen realised he was near surrounded. Twins on either side, and Sirius in front. "Do you have a girl?"

"What?" said Harry, unable to comprehend why Sirius was interested.

"Well, do you?" Sirius probed for more information that didn't concern

him.

"No."

"...Well, ever got laid?" said Sirius, apparently unconcerned with talking about this in front of his eight-year old twins.

Harry's eyes practically burst from their sockets. "I just turned sixteen not too long ago!"

Sirius frowned. "So you didn't get a specific birthday present that consisted of a Veela, to which you responded with: 'A gift I'll even enjoy unwrapping'."

Harry closed his eyes, and covered his ears, attempting to block out everything. He was relying on nearly all his extensive meditation to remain sane in this situation, and it still wasn't working brilliantly.

Harry then felt something strange on his face. His eyes snapped open, and Orion and Lyra had been drawing on his face with a marker pen. Harry growled at them, baring his teeth, and the two "eeped" and jumped back, starting to eat their lunch as if nothing had happened.

And all of a sudden, Harry jerked his head back, narrowly avoiding a missile pass his nose...only to see it was some mashed potato, thrown by Orion.

The mash hit Lyra instead.

The girl furiously got to her feet. "Food fight!"

Instantly, Harry jumped out of the way, knocking over his chair as the Blacks began hurling food at one another. He was at the centre of attention, and he really did not want the indignity of being hit - suddenly a tomato smashed into his nose.



"Right, now that's crossing the line," said Harry, immediately grabbing the plate with boiled carrots and hurling the entire lot at Sirius.

Things really just degraded from there, but a few standard household spells were all it took to get the place (and people) cleaned up.

Harry was on the verge of running over to Sirius' liquor cabinet and drinking himself into a stupor, provided it would help him calm down. With the amount of crap he'd had to deal since he'd reappeared in England, it was a wonder he'd not snapped and just told his parents (and Dumbledore...and Mervin) to fuck off.

"Haaaaarrrrry?"

Not again. Not again!

"Something the matter, Harry?" said Sirius. The twins were happily somewhere else doing something that no doubt would cause Harry hell, but they were gone and that was the important thing.

Harry was currently leaning back in a large armchair, while Sirius had just entered the room.

"I've had to babysit the two demons that you call Orion and Lyra. I think that's a valid explanation."

Sirius only chuckled. "Can't deny that." The widower walked over, falling into another armchair. "They're not cruel though, they're just curious about you."

"...?" Harry only raised an eyebrow, and almost subconsciously went to cradle his arm, even though he felt no pain...yet.

"Well, yeah. The only kids they've ever met called Potter was Hayden

and Oriana, and those two aren't all that fond of kids."

"And I am?"

Sirius snorted. "They can tell. They're better than I am at this. But seriously though...something on your mind? I mean, I'm a rubbish listener, and the worst person for all that feelings crap, but hey."

"...I'm thinking. Leave me alone."

Sirius only stayed silent, knowing Harry would continue.

"Did my parents put you up to this?" That was actually the first time Harry had ever referred to Lily and James as his parents since arriving in England. Even in his head, it had always seemed to be Lily and James.

Sirius blinked. He hadn't expected that. "No, why?"

"Was it Dumbledore?"

"No. You paranoid or something?"

Harry surveyed the Black. And then he remembered something. How many people truly knew about his magic problems? Dumbledore. James. Lily. Pomfrey. That was all he knew, but how many people would Dumbledore see necessary to inform of the altering of Harry's mind. And Sirius...would Dumbledore trust one of the most irresponsible morons in existence with something he might easily blurt out? Well...maybe, Sirius did seem to be capable of taking care of his kids on his own.

Well, he'd make a little hint, and see if Sirius reacted.

"I suppose...it's like my magic has been acting weird since I got here," said Harry, carefully observing Sirius for reaction.

"You serious?" said Sirius. "No Sirius/serious jokes, this is important. Haven't you told your parents about this? You might need a Healer or something. You can cast magic all right, or is it something else?"

It looked like Sirius was unaware, but he could be a good actor. Unlikely, but a possibility. So Harry continued making hints.

"Pomfrey made some diagnostic spells and showed there might be something weird, but Dumbledore said it was probably a mistake or accidental magic," said Harry. He was sure that if Sirius had been informed, he would agree to what Dumbledore said.

"That can't be right," said Sirius, scratching his unshaven chin. "If it was something from accidental magic, it would be over. Say...does it cause you pain?"

It was Harry's turn to be surprised. He never would have thought Sirius to be the one to figure it out, but to be fair, he'd forgotten all about Sirius till now.

"In my right arm-"

"Sounds like magical overload," said Sirius grimly, actually reminiscing on a past event. "Most people get it from when they use potions or rituals to enhance their magic, and they start getting full of more magic they can handle."

"But why does it act up when I start casting magic?" argued Harry. "If that was the case, it wouldn't occur, seeing as I'm using magic."

Sirius closed his eyes. Obviously, he wasn't used to such thought. "Damn, I thought I wouldn't have to any more thinking when I left school..." he grumbled, continuing to think. "Harry, pass me a Firewhisky, I think better when I'm drunk."

"Can't do that, you have kids around," responded Harry.

Sirius continued grumbling as he thought over the problem. "...Hm...it sounds like your magic has been converted, or at least some of it."

"What?" said Harry.

"Maybe your magic is acting in a way your body don't-"

"Doesn't," interrupted Harry.

"No smart-ass comments or I'm not telling," said Sirius, before continuing. "Your magic, or some of it, has become unfamiliar to your body. You know, like in biology. When the body converts glucose into glucagon, or glycogen, one of them. And when it needs more glucose, it converts it back."

Harry stared amazed at Sirius. "When did you learn about Biology?"

"It's amazing what you pick up when your best friends include Remus Lupin and Lily Potter," said Sirius. "Problem is, learning that made me forget who won the Quidditch World Cup back in 1978."

"...Well? Continue with the magic thing."

Sirius cleared his throat. "So, when you start casting spells, your magic converts back. But because it's been converted, your body's already been regenerating magic, and now it means you've got a full tank of magic and even more appearing."

"...Go on," said Harry.

"I'm guessing your body only continues converting back magic when you continue casting spells. So, casting a single spell- you'll do that without pain, 'cause you'll stop regenerating. Casting a load of spells in a short time starts to gradually pump you up with magic, after all,

it's unlikely you'll cast a really powerful spell. Considering the body is always regenerating magic, it means it's got a lot to convert, meaning when you reach a certain point, your body will start forcing as much magic out as possible, in usually painful ways to the user. That's a Sirius Orion Black theory."

Harry was actually speechless. Sirius Black of all people, had (maybe) correctly guessed what his condition was.

"Wait, how do you know anything about magical overloads?"

Sirius nervously scratched the back of his head. "I've done my part with Unspeakables, and besides, I did get good grades in school. Oh, and the fact my family was Dark and were the sort to use potions and rituals to enhance their magic."

"What about emotions influencing the body?" asked Harry. "What if the person under this overload goes into a heavily emotional state, and no longer feels this pain?"

Sirius shrugged. "Haven't a clue."

"Guess."

"You know, I did not sign up for this," complained Sirius, before working on his guess. A few minutes later, he came up with another theory.

"It sounds like this person definitely hasn't been affected through potions or rituals, such a thing is unheard off...but considering people tend to practically bleed magic in high emotion states, maybe you're losing magic fast enough to drain away excess magic."

Sirius looked curiously at Harry. "This is happening to you?"

Looking back, Harry had no idea why he did it, but he ended up

telling Sirius everything about the affecting of his mind and magic by Dumbledore's manipulation.

Harry had never been away from people for too long during his time with the Elumvians, and although not being much of a "people-person", he still preferred having some trustworthy company.

Sirius however, was loyal enough to be considered trustworthy. And the man was stunned to think that Dumbledore was putting a person through such pain. And that Lily and James would let him.

The problem was, just because Sirius may have correctly diagnosed Harry's condition, didn't mean he knew how to cure it. Rather, he was dreaming up ways to maim Dumbledore, ways that seemed to involve putting Remus Lupin in a crate (with sherbet lemons delivery written on the side) and sending it to Dumbledore on the full moon.

Sirius however, was eager to confront Dumbledore, Lily and James about this, but Harry made him see otherwise. Dumbledore would realise Harry already knew, and things would most likely degrade from there.

Eventually, Harry went back "home", Sirius still disgusted at what "parents" that two of his best friends had turned into.

"Harry?" asked Lily, as the two stepped through the Floo, Harry having completed his last day of OWLs. "Are you all right?"

'Like you would care,' Harry grumbled in his head, before saying: "I'm fine." According to Sirius' theories, that meant the best things to do would be to stay away from magic- fat chance of that in a wizarding household- maybe rest until his magic naturally drained away, or go into a state of high emotion, which would be the most effective, but was a bit hard to willingly do.

Harry gritted his teeth, still cradling his arm. The pain was worse than

the past two days combined.

"Harry? Are you sure you're-"

"Shut up!" shouted Harry, his anger coming through, the pain temporarily fading, before coming in even more.

The teen hobbled to the stairs, climbing one slowly at a time, and just reached his room before he collapsed, his body frenzying in spasms, while his mouth emitted pain-filled , meanwhile, had been in his room, writing a letter to a friend of his who did not have Floo. Keyword, "had", as he suddenly heard a loud noise, and screaming.

"What the hell?!" he exclaimed, jumping to his feet, before running out the door, and saw Harry lying on the floor, barely conscious, screaming, while his mother was attempting to levitate him.

"Mum, what the hell's going on!?" he demanded.

"I need some space Hayden!" shouted Lily, pushing open the door. "Floo-call Madam Pomfrey and Professor Dumbledore!"

Lily levitated Harry into the room, while Harry continued screaming, and if Hayden didn't know any better, worse...

"Wait a minute!" shouted Hayden, breaking Lily's concentration, and she dropped Harry.

"Hayden!" she scolded. "Look what you-"

"It was hurting him!" protested Hayden, and surely enough Harry's screams were nowhere as painful as they had been while Lily had levitated him.

Seeing as he had little choice, Hayden lifted his brother, slinging him over his back, wincing at both having to hold Harry still, and Harry's

weight.

'You'd think after all that time he spends in his room, he'd be a bit lighter,' thought Hayden. 'Or maybe I need to work out a bit more...' Mentally, Hayden slapped himself for having such pointless thoughts in such a situation.

Harry's eyes snapped open. He was in his room, the curtains closed, but by the sunlight still visible, it was still daytime.

The door pushed open, and Harry flung himself out of bed, subconsciously assuming it was a danger.

But it was Hayden.

The shorter boy nervously cleared his throat. "Er...yeah...Dumbledore's here...he wants to see you about something..."

Hayden made to leave, but Harry's voice stopped him. "What happened?"

"You just sort of went crazy," said Hayden. "I carried you onto your bed since levitating spells just seemed to hurt you more..."

Harry contemplated that. Yes, that made sense. More magic would only increase his pain. And then he remembered the entirety of Hayden's words. "You carried me?"

Hayden nodded, before heading for the door.

"...Thanks."

"What?" said Hayden, turning around.

"I'm thanking you. It means nothing more," said Harry.



"Yeah well...you're welcome," replied Hayden, finally leaving.

Harry sighed, and sat back on his bed. Great, now it seemed Hayden was warming up to him. First sharing a pizza, now carrying him-

The door was pushed open again, revealing Albus Dumbledore, in purple robed glory.

"I heard about your state, Harry," said Dumbledore. "Let me assure you I feel the greatest sympathy for you."

Harry snorted.

"I have a few questions to ask you, Harry, and I will require your answers to be truthful." Dumbledore looked piercingly over his half-moon spectacles at Harry. "Are you in league with Lord Voldemort?"

"...Who?"

AN: Finally, the massive confrontation between Dumbledore and Harry.

As for Sirius, well, maybe he seemed a bit OOC. But in canon PoA, Remus refers to Sirius and James as being the smartest kids in the school- maybe a bit overdoing it, but most likely in their year- and that'd include Lily and Snape. And back in OotP, in Snape's Pensieve, James and Sirius discuss how easy their paper was. Besides, if Sirius can enchant a motorbike to fly, that says he must have something in his head.

What else do I have to talk about...ah yes, the people talking about Harry should go to some other country...later. Can't be bothered, and I haven't got much knowledge about most countries, apart from a lot of stereotypes, and a bit about current events.

## Chapter XI – Starting Hogwarts

"I have a few questions to ask you, Harry, and I will require your answers to be truthful." Dumbledore looked piercingly over his half-moon spectacles at Harry. "Are you in league with Lord Voldemort?"

"...Who?"

"No, not who...You-Know-Who."

"...Are you...feeling okay?" said Harry.

Dumbledore looked more shocked than anyone had ever seen him. "You mean you seriously do not know who Lord Voldemort is?"

"Isn't that French?" said Harry. "Is this guy French?"

"Lord Voldemort is the very Dark Lord who was responsible for what happened to your family, when you and Hayden were but a year old."

Harry thought back. "Oh right, that Lord Voldemort...wonder how I forgot all that?"

"...So, it would appear you are unaware of the link," said Dumbledore, more to himself.

"What link?" said Harry.

"As you know, Lord Voldemort attacked you and your brother, and Hayden stopped him. However, a link was created between Hayden and Lord Voldemort, and as well as that, because of all the remnants of Dark magic, a link was formed with you as well. Through this link, Lord Voldemort has been able to sap your power, and-

"Wait a moment," interrupted Harry. "Isn't this Voldemort dead?"

Dumbledore shook his head sagely. "No. By using Hayden's blood in a ritual, he was able to return. But...when Lord Voldemort returned, his body was nowhere as powerful as it was. Voldemort stated: "I needed the other half for this," and it was when Hayden told me those words, when I realised you were alive."

"I'm the one giving Voldemort power?" said Harry indignant. "Why me and not Hayden?"

"Because Harry, the newspapers are true...Hayden is the Chosen One."

"...You've lost me again."

"I apologise for suspecting you were in league with Voldemort. I am after all, like any other man, and capable of making mistakes. As such, I often tend to make great mistakes. An old man's mistakes Harry-"

Harry yawned. "I'm sorry, I think I may have fallen asleep. You see, I am so bored by this story of yours."

"I've suspected that you had a link as well since you said that you could also speak to snakes when you were a child-"

"What!?" said Harry. "But my parents didn't hear-"

"I may be an old man Harry, but these ears are more than capable at singling out a certain voice." At Harry's disbelieving gaze, Dumbledore continued. "And a well-chosen spell will work wonders."

"So...you say this Voldemort was the one draining power from me..." Harry put two and two together. "So that's who you've been trying to weaken, by weakening me as well."

Dumbledore looked surprised, but Harry scoffed. "You think I'm stupid enough to not notice my magic being affected?"

"When I ran a scan of your mind, I found what appeared to be a link, and sealed it." Dumbledore sighed, before continuing. "However, it turned out, that I only did so by placing a seal over part of your magic, affecting it in many ways. I believe what happens is your magic is co-"

"Converted by my body," continued Harry. "And while my magic reserves refill, that means the converted magic converts back when I try and cast a spell, giving me severe magical overload. That means magical drain when I'm not casting, magical overload when I am."

Dumbledore's eyes widened. "You worked that all out on your own. How did you only get recommended for seven OWLs?"

Harry shrugged. "Schooling system must be crap or something."

Obviously, Harry felt no need to get Sirius in trouble with Dumbledore, but given the man's reckless nature, something told Harry that Sirius might welcome it.

"Anyway Harry, your parents have been urging me to find a way to help your situation, and I am pleased to offer you a mild solution."

Dumbledore offered Harry a necklace, which Harry took, eyeing it strangely. It was golden, intricate runes weaved into it.

"What does it do?" asked Harry.

"Once you start casting spells, the necklace will automatically activate, and begin draining magic," said Dumbledore. "Since your magic reserves are fairly large, then it will be a temporary measure until you start feeling pain. Once you have stopped casting spells, the necklace will give you back magic anyway, to stop that "magic drain,

then magic overload".

"And that's it?" said Harry. "Nothing else?"

"That is it."

Harry still eyed the necklace suspiciously, but slipped it on. "This is only a temporary measure, you know. Why can't you just remove the seal?"

"I believe I told you. It weakens Voldemort. Death Eater attacks have decreased rapidly, but-

"Still, this necklace, how long will it work?" challenged Harry. "At least I'll be at my full power."

Dumbledore looked visibly angered. "I acknowledge this is a great burden, but you must also understand, that this is a case of the greater-

"I'm just a teenager," argued Harry. "Why is my pain so unimportant? If a person constantly has magical overload, that's not a particularly safe thing. Hell, it can mean death!"

"But many deaths have been saved already Harry, and we are still working on ways to not have your magic also affected-

"Then put up a seal when you've found a way to stop my magic getting affected!"

Dumbledore was bristling with anger. "Mr Potter, I suggest you stop being so childish."

"I'm childish?" said Harry though gritted teeth. "You should be the ones capable of repelling attacks and saving people! Solve your own damn problems; don't drag me into it-!"

"Good day Mr Potter, I look forward to seeing you at Hogwarts," said Dumbledore coldly, heading for the door.

"You'll go when I can say you can, old man!" roared Harry, and his pent-up anger was unleashed a second time.

But this time, its victim would be an old wizard, rather than a wall.

Harry's battle-staff shot out from its hiding place, un-shrinking. Harry leapt up from his bed, catching the staff with ease and advanced on Dumbledore as a predator hunts.

Dumbledore however, spun around much faster than an old man should be capable of. He cast a quick spell, and Harry fell to his knees, no visible wound or even injury, but pain erupting across his torso, as if he had been slashed with a sword.

Harry suddenly looked to where his staff had fallen, and to his shock, he saw that it had been neatly severed at the middle.

"I am sorry I had to resort to that Harry, but I must inform you that I will accurately respond to any attacks on my person," said Dumbledore. "Indeed, you have only proved to me you would be incapable of controlling your magic if it was unsealed."

Dumbledore turned away, heading for the door a second time.

Harry's eyes were still locked on the severed pieces of his staff. Gifted to him by Master Kain when he was eight...eight years that staff had been his trusted companion, his prized magical foci...

And another wave of anger rushed over Harry, and his vision tinted red.

And even Dumbledore, a man who had rarely ever felt fear, could not

help but shudder as he turned.

Harry looked a twisted, broken figure. His fingers were curled up, but not forming fists. His jet-black hair fell across his face, emphasising the dark circles around his eyes. The red aura of anger was even causing his bandana to blow in an invisible wind. And Harry stood in a half-crouch, half-stoop.

The teen lunged forwards, but he felt another invisible slash cut across with him. It did not stop him, but a few more changed everything.

A powerful Stunner later, and Harry sank to the ground, his magic fighting the effects, but still, he was forced to fall unconscious.

'Damnit,' he cursed in his head, as his vision turned black. 'I spend so much time falling unconscious these days...'

"Harry... Harry!"

Harry opened his eyes to see his pare- James and Lily. "Oh. It's you two."

Judging by the calls of the birds, and that there was still morning light, another day had begun.

Harry climbed out of bed, watching his parents move back. He eyed the clock to see it was ten. He sighed, late.

"It was just a Stunner, couldn't you have just revived me?" he asked.

"You haven't been sleeping very well for the past few days," said Lily softly.

"Yeah, that's the new efficient way of ensuring we get our eight hours. Hit us with Stunners," said Harry.

James cleared his throat. "Harry...we're sorry-"

Harry waved it off. "Figured you'd be."

"What?" said Lily.

Harry shrugged. "I'm not forgiving you, if that's what you mean. I simply said that I understand that you are sorry. Doesn't mean I forgive you. Can't just get rid of hell with a word, you know," he said, as he picked up the broken pieces of his staff, and examined them sadly.

Maybe Harry was acting strangely, but he knew it was the most mature response. Rise above them. Be the better man. Or in some cases, be a bigger bastard to them than they were to you.

"Well, how could we...earn your forgiveness?" asked Lily.

"Here's a start, get out of my room."

The two left, while Harry began stretching, his mind starting to plan for the days ahead...first off, he'd pay back Dumbledore for breaking his staff. With interest.

The door was pushed open, revealing James. "Oh, by the way, we got your OWL results."

"That was fast. Don't they take a few months-"

James only shrugged. "Considering it's August, they had to get them marked instantly, didn't they? They only had to mark a few papers after all."

Harry took the envelope and opened it, surprised mildly.



## ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL RESULTS

Pass Grades: Outstanding Plus (O+) Outstanding (O) Exceeds Expectations (E) Acceptable (A)

Fail Grades: Dreadful (D) Troll (T)

HARRY JAMES POTTER HAS ACHIEVED:

Ancient Runes: O+

Astronomy: E

Charms: O+

Defence Against the Dark Arts: O+

Herbology: E

Muggle Studies: E

Transfiguration: O+

You have received four Outstanding Pluses. This mark is given to those students who were in the top five percent of grades for the subject they were examined in. Considering that you took OWLs at a later date, you have displaced other grades that were given.

"Displaced? Guess that means I took other people's grades," said Harry.

"Damn, I only got two O pluses, in Defence and Transfiguration," grumbled James, looking over Harry's shoulder to see his marks. "How the hell did you do that well?"

"Anyone can turn an animal into furniture or change its colour. It's a

stupid exam," said Harry.

"Really? Where was the other five percent?" said James.

"Probably lost on written papers. Hate theory. Always have, always will. Now get out of my room."

James snapped his fingers. "That reminds me. Today you'll have to buy school supplies. Hayden and Oriana are also getting their stuff, but me and Lily are busy. The three of you will be going with-"

"If you say Sirius and the twins, I will murder you. I will wrap my hands around your throat, and throttle you until you die."

The older man cut himself off. "Well, since you already know, here," James quickly handed Harry a small pouch of Galleons. "Have fun!" James sprinted to the door, in case Harry decided to throttle him anyway.

"Bastard," grumbled Harry, before his eyes lit up. Undisturbed time with book stores, having enough money...maybe he finally had a chance to be cured.

One in the afternoon saw a motley crowd go down Diagon Alley. A grinning man supporting a small girl on his shoulders and a small boy standing by his side. A red-haired girl and a black-haired boy, both giving suspicious looks to the two children, who smiled back innocently. Last but not least, another teen, his head in a book.

"So, where do we go first?" asked Sirius happily, looking at Oriana and Hayden, who shrugged.

"Mum's already ordered our robes...just books really," mumbled Oriana.

"Can we go get ice cream?" said Lyra, pulling slightly on Sirius' ears.

"Now now Lyra, remember what I told you," said Sirius.

Lyra thought for a moment. "Oh yeah! The ice cream man got kidnapped and is probably dead!"

Harry, Oriana and Hayden all turned to stare at Sirius and Lyra in disbelief.

"Sirius, what the hell do you teach your kids?" asked Harry, voicing his siblings' thoughts.

"I don't believe in lying to the kids just because it sounds nicer," responded Sirius. "So...where's the book store again? Haven't been there since..." Sirius thought for a moment. "Since I was at school."

Once the group had arrived in Flourish and Blotts, they once again set upon their separate ways. Hayden and Oriana started ordering the school books, the duo having to order Harry's books as well, seeing as he seemed disinterested by the idea of school books. Orion and Lyra were making nuisances of themselves, giving the shop assistant the most exercise he'd had all week. Sirius was in the "Restricted Section" of the store, although this was named such as it contained books not suitable for minors.

And Harry was in a dusty corner of the store, picking tomes of an even dustier shelf.

'Note to self,' he thought. 'Learn a spell that repels dust.'

Sadly for Harry, like the books in the Potter house, the Mind Arts only seemed to be vaguely touched upon.

As he came to the conclusion he wouldn't find any use in the books available, he gave up, and let his mind wander, back to the events of the previous days.

OWLs, Dumbledore, parents.

Dumbledore was impossible to think off without thinking up some insults, so Harry let his thoughts fall to his parents. Quite frankly, they'd dug their grave.

He sighed. He hoped they didn't try to do something stupid to earn his forgiveness, because he simply wasn't giving any. Or at least, what did forgiveness mean? Harry held some ill thoughts towards them, but provided they were away from him- far away, while he was in a non-Portkey area- he'd wish them all the best.

His aims were to free his magic and seek revenge for the pain and his staff against Dumbledore. Making his parents pay would just be a waste of time. Besides, Sirius would probably do it anyway.

A giggle was heard through the area. Apparently Sirius had found a really good book.

Disgruntled, Harry grabbed a random tome he hadn't noticed before, and looked down at the contents. The book was appeared to be about enhancing magic.

'Hm...didn't Sirius say that could create magical overload?' Intrigued more than anything, Harry continued down the contents page. And he finally found something: "Enhancing the Senses through the mind."

The chapter had only been half a page long, but Harry finally had some trace of his senses back. The book had explained through use of meditation, or allowing magic to filter into the senses, temporarily enhancing them.

Sadly, it was only temporary, but it was a step in the right direction.

But once again, cold reality reminded him he had a lot of ground to cover, and steps would take a while. And that also reminded him of the staff that lay in broken pieces in his bedroom.

That reminded Harry. He'd already met a man who worked with magical foci.

Harry left the store, finding the others. "I'm going to see Mr Ollivander," was all he said, and he headed away.

Sirius yelled at him to be at the Leaky Cauldron in half an hour.

A few minutes later, Harry had opened the door of Ollivander's Wands.

"Mr Olliv- how the hell did you appear right behind me?!" said Harry, spinning around.

"Ah, the lost child. Back again. So we did meet again, far more quickly than I had anticipated."

"Do you make staffs?" said Harry, coming straight to the point.

Ollivander actually looked surprised. "Nay, my boy, the crafting of the magical stave is in a far more different branch of magical foci creation than wands." Ollivander surveyed Harry. "Why would you wish for one?"

"I need an extendable staff, to replace...my previous one."

Ollivander nodded sagely. The loss of a precious foci was quite a blow to even the greatest of wizards. "My apologies, lost child, but as I've said, I do not make staves."

"Look, I'm not lost. I thought we came to an agreement about that."

"But you were," said Ollivander, repeating himself from their last encounter.

"Well, then you could call me a toddler, because I was one once," said Harry, rolling his eyes. "So, do you know anyone who does make staffs?"

"Staff making is a rare art amongst the witches and wizards of today, Mr Potter. Old staffs were cumbersome and weak, as are many crafted today. Few know how to make a true powerful staff," said Ollivander. "And even fewer know how to correctly wield one."

"I've used a staff for eight years," said Harry. "I'm a lot more comfortable with one than a wand."

Ollivander closed his eyes in thought. "I will look into this for you, but I will not guarantee anything."

August came to an end, far too swiftly for Harry, who realised at the end of it, it was the worst month he'd had in eleven years.

And he was currently being forced to do something that most people did regularly in the wizarding world. His parents were instructing him, as he was unfamiliar with it, but that was quite an unwanted conversation, as Harry had no intention of doing so.

And all these silly things about wearing them correctly and cleaning them, and knowing when they're just too well-used and need to be Vanished away.

"Look, I appreciate this," said Harry sarcastically. "But I have no intention of wearing these stupid robes, let alone learning how to maintain them."

"Harry," said Lily patiently. "You have to wear the correct school uniform-"

"You're right," said Harry. "Not wearing the correct uniform is a terrible offence. I should be expelled the moment I walk through those doors of Bogwarts."

"Hogwarts," corrected Lily.

"I know what I said."

"You'll be in sixth year, you have to set an example for the younger years as well!"

"You're right, I'll instruct them on all the easy ways of running away for eleven years and coming back, but know how to remain on your guard for unwanted Portkeys that certain people might drop."

Lily looked like she wanted to strangle something, but James just looked amused as always, probably at the idea of following Hogwarts rules.

The two left the room, and Harry sniggered.

Ever since the two had made it clear they wanted forgiveness, Harry used the opportunity to have as much fun as possible.

Harry closed his eyes, remembering a certain memory just a few days ago.

Harry entered the living room, where Hayden was sitting in front of the television (it was Muggle, but like Sirius' motorbike, enhanced with a few magic features). Quite popular amongst Muggle-borns and half-bloods.

"Hayden, pass the remote," said Harry.

"No way," replied the twin, watching his show.

Harry looked around, and Lily was just outside the room.

"Oh the woe!" he cried. "Five years of neglect, my parents not trusting me, and look at this, my own brother won't just let me watch a television!"

Lily entered. "Hayden, move. It's Harry's turn to watch."

"What!?"

"Move!"

Hayden begrudgingly got off the sofa, which Harry sat at, while Lily gave him a bowl of popcorn, before she left the room.

"Hey, Hayden, massage my feet," said Harry, changing the channel.

"Screw you!"

Harry cleared his throat. "Oh the woe-!"

"Fine, damnit! Fine!"

Harry sniggered again.

Although, that hadn't been the best highlight of the past month. That had been was making James and Lily guilty not for getting him any birthday presents over the eleven years he was missing.

It was a whole new level of lowness, yet so fun.

A few days later saw Harry sitting alone in a compartment of the Hogwarts Express, Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

He snorted. Nine and Three-Quarters. Mathematically speaking, it



should be Nine and a Half, seeing as the entrance was at the barrier in the middle.

Hayden had joined up with that red-head Ron, and some bushy-haired girl. Oriana had gone over to this other redhead girl who probably was related to Ron.

More than five people had entered Harry's compartment, and the same amount had gone right back out again as they were greeted with threatening glares.

Harry sighed. Here he was, going into the territory of a man who sealed his magic and broke his staff, all in the name of some people who weren't able to protect themselves or have a secret way out of their houses in the case of attacks.

He lightly massaged the blackened rings around his eyes, before letting his hands fall away, leaving one to feel the rest of his face.

And he remembered a thought he'd had the day he'd reappeared. He needed a shave.

Bandana, unshaven, unkempt long hair, dark rings around his eyes...probably not the best first impression you could make.

The compartment door slid open, revealing three very stupid looking people.

Two looked like they would grow up to become stereotypical thugs. The last-with that hair colour and style, he looked like he'd grow up to be a child molester.

"Well, well, well, Potty. All alone are we? Time for payback for last year, Potter," said future-child-molester.

Future-stereotypical-thugs chuckled in what they must have thought

was a menacing manner.

Harry blinked. "Who are you three?"

Future-child-molester looked surprised, before taking a second look at Harry, and coming to the realisation that this was not Hayden Potter.

"Who are you?" said future-child-molester.

"You came into my compartment, you'll give me your name before I give you mine," replied Harry, his hand slowly creeping towards his wand in case the three tried something.

"Draco Malfoy," he said snobbishly, "And this is Crabbe and Goyle."

"Harry."

"No family name? What are you, disowned?" said Malfoy, and Crabbe and Goyle started laughing, even though they probably didn't even understand what was going on.

Harry merely drew his wand, and blasted the three outside the compartment. Another wave of the stick of holly, and the door slid shut.

Pleasantly, Harry noticed that he hadn't felt a bit of pain in his arm. At least Dumbledore, still the cause of the problem, had found something that seemed to work...even though it was a temporary measure.

Not too long later, the compartment door began to slide open again, and Harry reached for his wand, ready to blast Drakey-boy and his daft duo again.

To his surprise, he was greeted by the sight of a girl with dirty-blonde

hair and a newspaper that she was reading upside-down.

"Aren't there other compartments for you to go in?" Harry snapped.

"Too many of them are infested with Nargles," deadpanned the girl.

"...What's a Nargle?"

"There are no living witnesses," said the girl seriously, sitting in the seat across from Harry.

Harry sighed, and the girl spoke again. "You shouldn't do that. Wrackspurts infest the brain when you leave your mouth open."

"Right, who are you?"

"There is much power in names."

"Oh for the love of-"

"Luna Lovegood," and the girl looked piercingly at him. "You're Harry Potter, aren't you."

"Yes," replied Harry. "Now-"

"You're not like Hayden."

"I'm glad."

"Why?"

"Many reasons."

"Hayden's very good friends with some people."

"If you're one of them, go away."

"The Weasleys like Hayden," said Luna. "They're quite nice, but they do tend to be quite sensitive about their finances."

"So they're poor? No surprises there, they probably spent all their money on finding a cure for being ginger."

"Ginger? What could the Weasley's have to do with biscuits?"

It was going to be a long journey...

Harry towered over the nervous first-years.

Why the hell did he have to go with them in the stupid boats? Although, it had been quite fun when he knocked a first-year overboard.

"We're ready for you now. Mr Potter, please bring up the rear," said McGonagall.

Harry sighed, waiting for the first-years to begin leading, and he followed gloomily as the doors of the Great Hall opened.

It was no surprise to the teen when he became the subject of many stares and mutterings.

"Who's the big guy?"

"Looks like Hayden, with more hair."

"Nice bandanna. Need to get one of those."

As the Sorting Hat began its work on the first years, Harry examined the hall, scowling at anyone he caught staring at him. The whole ceiling-sky thing was pretty impressive, he didn't think he'd noticed that the first time he was here, or maybe he'd forgotten.

"Potter, Harry."

Harry approached the stool, placing the Hat on his head. He kept his head lowered, so no one could see his face. Explainable, he felt like a complete fool.

"Well, this is interesting," said a voice in his head, and before Harry knew it, he had been drawn into a mental conversation.

"Surely his eyes shouldn't have closed," said Hermione, looking at Harry.

Hayden shrugged. "It takes time for some people. Did for me."

"Wonder what house he'll get," said Ron.

"Hey, Weasley," Seamus said down the table. "Bet you ten sickles on which house he'll get."

"Fine, ten on Gryffindor," replied Ron.

"My ten's on Slytherin," replied Seamus.

"Ten on Ravenclaw," said Dean, entering the conversation.

They looked around, waiting for someone to say "Ten on Hufflepuff." But there wasn't enough time, as Harry's eyes suddenly snapped open.

"You shall be in..."

The tension was filling the room, in particular the Gryffindor table where three boys had bet on the outcome. What happened next, only a select few could have guessed.

"RAVENCLAW!"

And Dean very happily took his winnings, as Harry stood up to the polite applause of his new house.

OMAKE: Sirius the Black

One in the afternoon saw a motley crowd go down Diagon Alley. A grinning man supporting a small girl on his shoulders and a small boy standing by his side. A red-haired girl and a black-haired boy, both giving suspicious looks to the two children, who smiled back innocently. Last but not least, another teen, his head in a book.

"So Harry, what's that?" said Sirius, Lyra still sitting on his shoulders.

Harry showed him the cover, and Sirius read it aloud. "Return of the King..." Sirius struck a dramatic pose, as if he was holding a staff. "Fear me! I am the legendary wizard, Sirius the Black!"

"Fear him! Fear him!" cried Lyra and Orion in unison.

"Give me the One Bandanna!" shouted Sirius, approaching Harry.

"The One Bandanna to Rule Them All!"

Nothing to say really. How about...a rant?

Yeah, it's been a while since I've had a good rant.

Harry and the gang in Surrey. I've seen a couple of fics where Harry joins a gang at the Dursleys...in Surrey.

Really, it's obvious whoever writes these fics doesn't know anything about England, seeing as Surrey is full of idiots. They're the sort of people who go around attempting to get Best Lawn Prizes, they require four-wheel drive to get over some leaves in the road- the

Dursley's are the exact stereotypical version of Surrey people. If there are gangs there, they'd be shit! If they robbed a bank, it'd look like this!

"Put your hands in the air- and dance!"

Oh yeah, the jokes are going to start gradually disappearing. I mean, for the first couple of chapters, there's bound to be jokes, he'll be at Hogwarts. But as the seriousness, and the fighting starts appearing, the jokes will start disappearing.

As for the Ravenclaw thing, yeah, I talked to Quatreastrophe about that, who was all for it, but requested Luna becomes Harry's friend, which obviously the train ride will lead up to.

I'd like to put up some more rants, like all those "Harry is uber-powerful, but he's a complete spineless shit when it comes to dealing with his girlfriend, he's at the point of putting on rubber and calling her mistress", or those "Dumbledore's Manipulative, but he can very easily be overcome, he's so stupid he'd let himself be caught out by a kid and his girlfriend, as well as leaving plenty of evidence and saying "It was for the greater good"", but sadly, I'm tired.

Oh, by the way...Horcruxes. I'm finding it hard to decide whether these should go into the fic or not, as this fic was started pre-HBP, and Quatreastrophe never read Deathly Hallows.

If you're someone who has a valid opinion, comment on this. I now actually reply to reviews- I won't if it's two words long, but then I might reply and ask you very graciously what the fuck are you doing on a site about writing if you can only say two words in a review.

## Chapter XII- A Scar in the Dark

Harry stumbled into the Great Hall, rubbing his eyes as he made it to the Ravenclaw Table. A week had passed since the Sorting, and he was beginning to familiarise himself with the castle and students.

The other Ravenclaws were generally a good sort. Anthony Goldstein and Michael Corner occasionally could be bastards, but even they were usually decent. The Hufflepuffs were easy going and usually hard to rouse. The Gryffindors and Slytherins usually disliked each other at best, but the only real Slytherins who could really irritate anyone were Draco Malfoy and his lackeys.

Having been blown out of a train compartment, he'd taken it upon himself to start stalking Harry with his pet gorillas, Crabbe and Goyle. Still, Malfoy was hardly a real danger, more like having an irritating fly buzzing around. Apparently he was supposed to be Hayden's arch-rival for something, but Harry doubted that. He'd had a bit more respect for Hayden lately, and doubted the guy could possibly be wasting his time with Malfoy.

Harry poured himself a cup of tea, and took a couple of pieces of toast. Hm. What was it with him always having toast for breakfast?

"Might want to drink two cups, Harry," said Terry Boot. "Remember what we've got first today?"

Harry groaned. "Defence."

Defence Against the Dark Arts was quickly becoming a very irritating subject for Harry. Well, not the subject. The teacher. That senile short woman he'd bumped into that day in Diagon Alley was the teacher. Name? Professor Black. Harry had discovered she was Sirius' great-aunt, which probably explained a lot. She was getting to be more irritating than Dumbledore, if for the reason she owned a cane which she enjoyed hitting people with.



Malfoy and Hayden were her favourite targets, but Harry had very quickly stepped into third.

But Hogwarts was starting to grow on him, and probably would've done so quicker if he pretended several people did not exist. When he'd first arrived, his paranoid mind had conjured up all kinds of ideas as what would happen, being treated like a prisoner, under the watch of teachers, gargoyles, magical portraits, and students paid to spy on him, and drugged food- the last two were really strange ideas his mind had come up with.

If anything, the place reminded him of the school with the Elumvians. It was built in ancient times, the pupils were still innocent and quite a few curious about this strange person called Harry Potter, and there were a combination of good teachers- and those who hated him (except here, the only teacher who hated him was Snape, so in that respect, Hogwarts was actually better).

Harry frowned, why couldn't he remember the name that the Elumvians had given the school? He'd been there for so many years, why would he forget? Then it dawned on him, he was meant to forget. He searched his mind for faces, names, but the names of his friends were already fading, their faces pictures in his head that were difficult to grab.

Why had not the Elumvians been worried about sending him away? He'd put it down to the spells they'd placed on his mind so he could not reveal anything, nor could his mind be searched for it. But could spells like that honestly be permanent, when he was so far from the casters?

So, in time, he'd forget it all. His disappearance for eleven years was barely brought up anymore with his family at least, would he even forget that had occurred? All that'd remain were lost memories and the sound of war-drums, but perhaps they too, would fade.

So, one side, Dumbledore had screwed him over. On the other hand, the Elumvians had done their share as well. Hell, Dumbledore had said he'd messed up with Harry's mind because of a mistake- was that mistake due to the fact the Elumvians had stuck their spells in his head as well?

"Are you alright?" Lisa Turpin asked him, leaning across the table to peer at his face. "You look like you want to kill someone."

Harry pondered his answer as he watched the neighbouring Ravenclaws lower the noise of their own conversation, sending him quick looks as they tried to listen in. They may be clever, but they don't necessarily make good eavesdroppers, Harry noted.

"Yeah, I was just thinking about the time Hayden blackmailed me not to tell anyone about him sleeping with Pansy Parkinson," Harry said flatly.

"What?" said Lisa and several other Ravenclaws simultaneously as Harry took a draught from his cup. Now that he mentioned Hayden- he lowered the cup and looked over at the Gryffindor table. He cast a look at his siblings. Hayden was talking with his close friends, Ron Weasley, and Hermione Granger. Oriana was with a few girls in her year he didn't know the name of, chatting animatedly with them.

As for the rest of his family- his parents had sent him a letter congratulating him on getting Sorted into Ravenclaw. He didn't understand why, he'd just put a Hat on in front of the school, but judging from the closing few lines, they were trying to hint that he should write back every now and then. Well, as long as they didn't mind letters that contained very little fact.

Hm, he'd dedicate the first paragraph about Professor Flitwick's attempts to force gnomes for his diamond mining operations- that sounded familiar. It was what Luna Lovegood told him when he'd

been introduced to Flitwick, Head of Ravenclaw. He really had to get better at staying away from her otherwise he might end up believing this stuff. Although still, he was going to put that in his letter.

Sirius and the Twins had sent him a few letters too. Orion and Lyra had congratulated him on being a huge nerd to get into Ravenclaw, while Sirius had written his message under that, giving him advice that was not suitable for Harry to ever tell anyone else.

By the time he'd broken out of his thoughts, the Ravenclaws had already figured out he was messing with him and had started talking about something else.

"-sounds good. Hm- Harry, you want to come with us?" Michael asked.

"What?" He said. "Wasn't paying attention."

"You have a free after Defence?" Terry asked, and after receiving a nod of acknowledgement, he continued. "You want to play Quidditch with us? We're giving the seventh-years a game."

"Sorry," Harry said. "Couple of reasons- I don't have a broom."

"Borrow one," said Anthony. "Don't your brother and sister both have brooms?"

"And secondly," Harry continued, unfazed, "I need to stop by the library."

"What book is stopping you from playing Quidditch?" Michael said, in mock outrage.

"Just a little something from the Restricted Section," Harry replied.

"Wait a minute," said Terry. "You have a permission slip, then?"

"Permission slip?" Harry repeated. "You need a permission slip for the Restricted Section?" The book he'd actually been after was The History of Magical Foci. He'd heard that was in the Restricted Section, but he figured that was probably some age limit and being sixteen was probably good enough.

"Well, yeah, otherwise it wouldn't be Restricted," said Terry. "Guess no one told you since you're new. You want to play Quidditch then?"

Harry shrugged. "Alright. Guess I'll ask Hayden for his broom in Defence."

But his mind was not on Quidditch.

He was thinking about the book. He'd heard about it from a couple of seventh-years. It had a chapter on staves, including detailed diagrams that would come in handy for someone trying to recreate one. He couldn't do so, but he knew someone who could stand a better chance.

Although he still couldn't work out if it was even worth it. Harry was still getting used to adjusting to a wand, but he knew he was quickly getting more compatible with it with every spell he casted, and by the time he got Ollivander to make a new staff, he'd probably have already reached the same compatibility he had with his old staff.

The reason he'd been so attached to the last one was because it was really his last memento of his past, well, apart from that "battle-armour" which was shrunk down and shoved somewhere. Technically, it was more of a robe with some resistance to magic, but he and a few friends back there had always called it battle armour.

But the permission slip- Harry was uncomfortable with the idea of letting teachers know what he was up to for the reason Dumbledore would learn about it, and chances were, the man who'd broken the

thing in the first place wouldn't be too keen on him getting a replacement. Even so, the teachers probably wouldn't give their permission for a book unrelated to the syllabus of his lessons.

Which meant Harry had two options: beg the teachers or steal it. Both ideas were bad, there was no denying it. But if he could pull the latter off- after all, he didn't actually have to steal it, just find the chapter and use a Copying spell.

"Master," greeted Harry, bowing slightly. "You called for me."

Harry was near the age of sixteen. In a matter of days, he would be returning to his homeland.

"Rise, my boy," Kain was staring out of the window, watching Elumvians students outside on a fine day.

There was silence for a few moments before Kain spoke again. "The last time we spoke like this, I called you son. And you called me father. It's strange how we've already reverted to our initial ways."

Kain turned to face Harry, and strangely enough, Harry could see that Master Kain seemed even older than before, age lines forming in his face, even a beard, both uncommon amongst the Elumvian. The half-elven people, unlike the elves of old, were not immortal, and it was clear Kain was getting into his later years.

"In a few days, Harry, you will return to your homeland. You are aware of it, are you not?"

"Of course, master."

"You will be missed."

"I'll miss you too, Master."

Kain chuckled. "Not just me. You have made friends here, Harry. They will eventually forget many other students, but I doubt few will ever forget you."

"Well, as the human guy," said Harry. "They won't remember anything else."

"Perhaps," Kain sighed disappointedly. "Did you know, Harry, I have remembered every student I have ever taught, Harry."

"All of them?" Harry said.

"Indeed," Kain nodded. "And few of them have ever surprised me as much as you. Not just because of your human status, or that you stayed here for eleven years rather than eight. You were different, in another way."

"Wow-here I was thinking you might be vague about this," said Harry. "What is it then?"

"None of the children I ever teach have ambition," said Kain. "That is the sad fate of us Elumvians, we are too tied down here in our islands. A lucky few will sometimes travel to the human realms, and we can update our knowledge with the progressing culture of Muggles and wizards, but the rest are just average. No matter how much we progress, it means nothing, Harry. We are lost from the world. We can never change it again. Our age came long ago."

"Couldn't I come back though?"

A flicker of something passed across Kain's face. "It is not our way. I wish you well, Harry. Do well wherever you go. Perhaps-no."

"What?"

"Never mind," Kain said. "You are dismissed."

Harry left the room, but still, he had seen a strange look on Kain's face that he'd never seen before in his teacher.

"Harry? Harry? Harry?"

"Leave it ta me, I'll wake 'im up!"

Harry felt the pain of a cane brought down on his shoulder.

"What the hell was that for?!" he demanded.

Judging by the way everyone was looking at him, he'd fallen asleep in DADA while Professor Black had been lecturing the class on some defensive hexes that were useful during non-verbal casting. The theory only ever seemed to bore him, he knew it was terrible, but he wasn't an organised person who could follow things like guidelines and schedules and spend half the class listening to theory when he'd rather see things for himself.

The cane poked him in the arm in a way that hurt much more than it looked. But still, it was irritating more than painful.

"Don't you be yellin' at meh, Potter!" shouted Professor Black, the short woman hopping up and down as she shouted back at Harry.

"Alright, alright, sorry," he said.

Irritated, Professor Black hobbled away. "Now, everyone, get into pairs and start practisin' spells! Potter, you better do sum good today or you'll be in detention!"

The students shuffled away from the desks as the elderly teacher waved her wand and stacked them against the walls. Harry found

himself paired with Terry Boot, who seemed to enjoy casting jinxes; but he didn't seem that good with shields.

"Terry, dodge this one," Harry hissed through his teeth. Terry looked confused but nodded, and Harry blasted a Banisher at him.

Terry managed to sidestep, turning around after he did so, and he was just in time to see Draco Malfoy getting blasted across the room.

"Terry, why did you do that?" Harry scolded. "You're supposed to shield them! I'm terribly sorry, Malfoy."

As Crabbe and Goyle helped a dazed Malfoy out of the desks he'd been blown into, Terry shot Harry a grin. "What did he do to deserve that?"

Harry only gave his own grin. He hadn't lifted a wand against Malfoy since that incident on the train, but after Malfoy's latest attempt to try and hit him with a few curses while he'd been on his way to DADA, he figured he'd retaliate.

Harry supposed this might be considered bullying and was just aggravating the situation, but from what he'd heard around school, no matter how badly he treated Malfoy, he really did have it coming. Out of all the students at Hogwarts, Malfoy was certainly the biggest arsehole of the lot.

"Think that was funny, Potter?!" Malfoy had recovered, and had stormed across the room with his thugs beside him.

"Well, yeah. I kinda did."

Terry stood beside Harry, and then a few more Ravenclaws had approached, as well as Hayden and his close friends, Ron and Hermione.



"What's all this?" Professor Black piped up, brandishing her cane as if it was a sword.

Harry shrugged. "You told me to do some good."

"We'll 'ave nun of that. If I catch yer fighting again, I'll lay meh cane across your shoulders. Both of yer!"

"Seriously," Harry started. "Isn't hitting us against the law?"

"Or I'll put yer in detention," said Professor Black. "Is that against the law?"

"No, no, that's fine," said Harry.

"What?!" Malfoy yelled. "He attacked me! Why am I getting in trouble!?"

Professor Black jabbed him in the stomach with her cane. "Don't yell at meh, boy." She said, as Draco clutched his stomach, stooping over, the jab apparently a lot harder than it had looked.

He shot a hateful glare at Harry, who frowned. He'd have to consider that if Malfoy did get angry enough, he might do something irrational and unexpected. It depended- how far would Malfoy be willing to go to get revenge?

Albus Dumbledore unwrapped a sherbet lemon. He popped it into his mouth, enjoying the sweet, and soon enough he cracked it open with his teeth to reveal the sherbet powder inside. But the sweet and sour taste could only distract him for so long, and soon enough his thoughts fell to other matters.

Harry Potter. He turned to the window- he could see him from here, playing Quidditch with his fellow students.

The young youth was quite the enigma, an intelligent boy, with plenty of potential- and of course, one of the candidates to the prophecy. He'd actually wondered whether Hayden was the true Boy-Who-Lived with Harry's reappearance, but in the end, it didn't matter. Both had been marked in Voldemort's attack- and for both to have remained like this had meant both had been corroded with Dark magic- and unless he had been aiming at a specific target and had not been firing at whichever he happened to point at first, this could mean they were both still valid candidates.

And well, maybe prophecies were just a load of rubbish anyway. But sadly, Voldemort certainly believed in them, which meant the Twins-Who-Lived would hardly be left alone to their lives.

He began to resume sorting through his mail, mostly so he could stop pondering about the Potters. Although that happened, his mood sank from reading the first letter he'd received. Despite his status as the Head Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards- which was arguably the most powerful position in the world- the other countries of the magical world were refusing to provide aid, just as they'd done in the last war with Voldemort.

And although Dumbledore hated the idea of even remotely condoning their actions, he knew they'd also seen the terror of Voldemort. The monster had spent many years travelling the world to learn as much as he could and had caused much chaos in his wake. Not all of it was ever confirmed as his, but the handiwork seemed to be the same.

Although Albus still had over a century's worth of knowledge to draw back for, he was getting too old for this, and would soon be helpless to even hold Voldemort off. And Harry, Hayden, or even Neville Longbottom- it would take them a very long time to ever be able to duel Voldemort to a standstill, let alone kill him. Even if they worked together, he doubted they would win.

For a moment, he wondered if the power mentioned in the prophecy was unity.

But Voldemort had been getting weaker. And he knew why. Dumbledore knew not whether it was intentional, but Voldemort had found a way to siphon magic from Harry. But, once Dumbledore had closed his link (admittedly, he'd never done such a thing before in all his years and had resulted in messing around with the boy's magic) Voldemort's power weakened considerably.

The only answer was that Voldemort had grown addicted to Harry's magic. This meant for the time being, Voldemort was weak. Eventually, he'd overcome the addiction, but for now, they had a chance to strike, and strike hard.

Finally- he'd remembered, back at the graveyard, Voldemort had tried to demonstrate that there was no blood protection- but there had been something, albeit much weaker.

Weak, but it had helped Hayden vastly in escaping the situation.

Dumbledore cleared his mind, reaching for another sherbet lemon. He spent too much time drifting into thought nowadays.

The next letter was selling Male Enhancement Products. He made a note to send it to Severus after he'd forged a second letter to go with it to make it seem like Sirius or James had sent it. True, he wanted the three of them to grow up, but their old rivalry had probably gone well too far by now, so he may as well get some fun out of it.

"Brilliant game, lads." Terry grinned, throwing an arm around Harry's shoulders. "And Harry, you never mentioned you were good at Quidditch."

They'd beaten the seventh-years. It had been close at first, but eventually the seventh year chasers had been too good and started

putting too many goals through the hoops. Michael had then switched from Seeker to take Anthony's place as Beater, and Anthony had taken Harry's place as Chaser, letting Harry play as Seeker.

He'd then just snatched the Snitch just before the seventh-years could've scored the goal that would've put them a hundred and fifty points ahead.

"I'm decent enough at it," said Harry. "And get off me."

Terry removed his arm, still grinning. "Maybe you should try out for the team or something. You just proved you're better than Cho at being a Seeker."

Harry couldn't help but smile as he recalled nicking the Snitch when it'd been just out of reach for the attractive Asian girl. "Sorry. Not interested in the team."

"What's up with the old stay-away-from-me thing you try and do?" Michael said.

"Hey, leave him alone," said Anthony. "He's a rebel, a loner, and he doesn't-"

"Stop it."

"Told you," said Anthony.

A clock somewhere in the school chimed. Harry stood pressed against the wall opposite it, observing the minute hand point up- as did the hour hand.

An eerie pale blue light appeared down the corridor.

'Ghost.' He thought, ducking into a dark alcove, letting the spectre

pass him. It wasn't until the light had completely faded when he moved on.

He resumed stalking along on his path. If he was correct, and he was sure he was, the library should be just around the corner from here-

And he found himself having to freeze as he heard footsteps. The corridors were still very dark, and Harry moved behind a suit of armour, as close as he could get to it without knocking it over.

To his surprise, it was Snape. The man strode through the corridor, muttering curses about something. Harry was tempted to follow Snape, but concluded it would be a very bad idea, and continued towards the library.

It was time to see if the information that the Ravenclaws had given him was correct. He'd asked a few others about it, and their stories seemed to match. The teen entered the library, not making a sound. He quickly found his way in the Restricted Section, beginning to browse through the books as quickly as he could, the only light a Lumos from his wand.

His eyes lit up, as he found the book.

The History of Magical Foci.

Harry opened it to a random page, looking for what he needed about staffs.

Many wizards are of the belief that all magic can be performed wandlessly; sadly, the power required means that many of the best wizards can barely perform a few wandless tricks. It is an art that can be performed only by the most skilled. Not just anyone can carry out wandless magic, because-

Harry irritably flipped several pages.

Several wizards often attempt to imbue Muggle "electric" technology with magic, but the best anyone can do is enhance them. Although some people have made some impressive progress by making these electric foci, the truth is, that this magic-technology (occasionally known as magitech or technomagic) is in truth considerably weaker than true magic.

True magic is far beyond the powers of these toys, real magic can only be wielded by a true magical being. I fully believe for this reason that wizards are superior to Muggles. They are but mere mortals, but we are that and we possess a gift, which is all too often taken for granted and wasted.

As interesting as that part sounded, Harry continued browsing, until he finally saw the word "staff."

The ancient staff was once the most used wizard foci, but over the years, it has proved to be more practical and useful to use wands. Wands are after all, often more accurate tools, as well as being shorter and thus easier to keep on one's person.

However, over the past sixty years or so, the extendable staff has appeared, and is now fairly popular in Europe, mostly the eastern countries.

The extendable staff first came into the public eye when several followers of the Dark Lord Grindelwald attacked a man named Kain-

"What?!" Harry exclaimed.

Harry fully intended to read on, but when he heard footsteps, he realised he'd shouldn't have spoken aloud. He'd messed up. Badly. He quickly placed the book back on the shelf, before extinguishing his wand, and running for it, as the footsteps grew louder.

"Who's there!?"

It was Snape.

Harry quickly managed to sneak out of the Restricted Section, heading behind some other shelves for cover. Snape had his wand illuminated fairly brightly, but he still hadn't spotted him.

"I know you're there! Come out, and I may be lenient!"

Harry glanced around, before grabbing a book off the shelf. He threw it into the Restricted Section, before moving swiftly through the library.

"The Restricted Section." Snape was growling through his teeth. "Who are you?! Student or intruder!?"

Harry looked around. He was nearly out of the library now- but he needed some way to ensure Snape wouldn't turn around, because the moment that Lumos was pointed this way, he'd be seen.

The war-drums sounded, and a wicked idea danced through his head, and he drew his wand and pointed it at a shelf, before pointing it at another, all the while muttering several words under his breath. And then-

The shelves flew through the air. Snape span around, not noticing Harry, but the shelves crashed into each other- above his head.

Snape found himself having to block the wreckage and books falling onto him- as he noticed a person leave the library. In anger he managed to fire off a set of curses towards the person, before resuming shielding off the wreckage, screaming obscenities all the while.

The curses had missed Harry- all save one, which had glanced off

his face, slashing it. Snape hadn't seen it, being too busy. Harry ran up the staircase, and he pressed his hand to his face, before looking back at it. It was covered in blood.

'Damnit, what the hell was that spell?!' Harry asked himself. He frantically tried to heal the wound, but the spell was doing very little. He was already starting to feel light-headed.

Harry headed through the nearest corridor with the least paintings. He'd never get back to the Ravenclaw dorm in this state. He saw a door, and took his chance, wrenching it open, and slamming it behind him. He quickly locked the door, before glancing around. Just an unused classroom.

Harry stumbled against the wall, slumping into the teacher's chair. He kept casting healing spell after healing spell at his face, concentrating his magic as well as he could.

After frantic minutes of casting, he began to feel the blood form clot.

'Jeez, that was a close one,' Harry sighed in relief, bringing his hand to his face again, wiping away the excess blood. And there was a lot of it.

He still felt dizzy from the blood loss, but this wasn't the time for that now. 'Better think of a way to get back to the dorm- and fast.'

Obviously, Harry was somewhat nervous the next day. He'd done his best to deal with the curse, but it had been no ordinary Cutter. It had left a scar stretching diagonally from near his mouth to half-way up his cheek, and he'd been able to do little to it.

For some reason, Anthony Goldstein had some sort of face powder, which Harry had been able to use to cover most the scar. Anthony had gladly let him take it; on the condition Harry told no one that Anthony owned make-up.



But as he entered the Great Hall, he was the last person to enter, having spent so much time disguising the scar. Dumbledore was standing, clearly about to address the Hall.

"Sit down, Mr Potter," said Dumbledore, gesturing towards the Ravenclaw table.

Harry found an empty seat at the Ravenclaw table. "What the hell's going on?"

"Something big happened, apparently," replied Terry.

"Wow, who'd have thought it?" said Harry. "Dumbledore about to address the entire school? No, clearly he's just lost a sock."

"Maybe a teacher is quitting? Snape looks mad, maybe he got fired?" Michael hazarded a guess.

"Life couldn't be that good," said Mandy Brocklehurst depressively.

Dumbledore cleared his throat, and immediately the whispers quietened. "This will come as a shock to many of you. Last night, Professor Snape was carrying out his usual patrol rounds, but he was distracted by a disturbance in the school library."

"Believing it was just a student out of curfew, Professor Snape entered the library. It was then when the person attacked Professor Snape, attempting to crush him with shelves."

'Don't remember that,' mused Harry. 'But then again, maybe he thought if he told everyone I tried to crush him rather than I broke shelves over his head, it'd sound more impressive that he "survived".'

"This is a serious breach of security in the school. The Ministry has been contacted. It is more than possible that this person sneaked

into the school on his own, but the possibility exists that he was given aid from within the school. If anyone wishes to come forward with any information, my office will remain open. Thank you."

Dumbledore sat down, as breakfast resumed, and Harry sighed again. How was he supposed to get that book now?

Meanwhile, at the Gryffindor table, they were having their own speculations.

"How about that, eh?" said Ron. "Snape nearly got killed."

"Yes, terrible," replied Hayden. "Nearly."

Hermione huffed. "He's still a teacher. You have to respect him."

Hayden shook his head. "I'll show him respect the day he shows me respect. And since that never will happen, why exactly do I have to show him respect?"

Ron nodded sagely in agreement.

"Wonder who did try to kill him?" Hayden suddenly mused. "I think we can just narrow it down, to uh, everyone. Save himself and Dumbledore, and most the Slytherins, I suppose."

"I thought he said it was someone from outside the school," Hermione said. "Pay more attention to these things."

"Oh yeah, but who'd want to kill Snape unless they were putting up with him?" asked Hayden.

Ron shrugged. "Former student?"

"Yeah, that's it! Guy gets low Potions mark, and is denied something in later life. Angered, he hunts down the man responsible."

Hermione sighed, as Hayden and Ron started developing this new theory of theirs.

"The History of Magical Foci?" Flitwick looked curious as to why Harry would be interested in such a book.

It was the end of a Charms lesson, and Harry had realised he'd have to go the straight and narrow if he was to get that book back. In other words, actually asking. He'd just hope there was some kind of student teacher confidentiality.

"Why would you want such a book?" Flitwick asked.

"Well, I was working with Mr Ollivander this summer, and he recommended that I read it," Harry said.

He couldn't believe he hadn't thought of that excuse earlier.

"Oh, a potential wand-crafter," said Flitwick, as he signed the slip. "Mr Ollivander must think quite highly of you, Harry. Well, don't disappoint him."

Harry nodded as he took the slip, and headed to the library.

Outside it, there was quite a crowd, which had formed a rough queue. Harry shoved his way through it, before bumping into his sister.

"What's up with the crowd?" he asked her.

Oriana blinked. "Haven't you been paying attention to what Dumbledore said? Library, Snape nearly dying, assassin, shelves used as weapons, Snape nearly dying, Restricted Section, leaks in school, and did I mention Snape nearly dying?"

"Maybe once," said Harry. "So what? Queues to go in?"

"Filch is checking everyone before they go in," said Oriana.

"Who's Filch?"

"Caretaker with the cat."

"That guy," Harry mused, as he tapped his forehead in thought. "Oh, the guy who always seems to be obsessed with getting whipping allowed again in schools?" He asked, receiving an answering nod.

Eventually, they came to the front, where Filch probed them with what appeared to be a painted stick, before letting them in. Harry left Oriana and headed directly to the librarian, Madam Pince, and displayed the slip Flitwick had signed.

"The History of Magical Foci?" questioned Pince, staring at the slip as it was forged. She stared into Harry's face, as if by doing so he would suddenly break down and confess to lies. Eventually, she yielded, and went to the Restricted Section to retrieve the book.

Harry read through the chapter dedicated to staffs. It was nightfall. Most the school was asleep, but Harry had found out there was added security in the school.

All the more reason to be staying in his dormitory. His dorm-mates were all asleep anyway.

He'd also hadn't discovered whether the Kain in the book was Master Kain, but it seemed likely, after all, they did briefly visit the countries of humans.

Little was known about the mentioned man apart from how he'd skilfully defended himself from Grindelwald's thugs, and the extendable staff had grown in popularity in Eastern Europe, as people saw him as an inspiration- despite that this Kain had only ever

fought this small gang. But the book vaguely described some of the techniques Kain had used with the staff, and they seemed reminiscent of the Elumvians' ways of fighting.

'Master, how are you right now?' Harry asked in his head. He remembered a few days before he left how he'd overheard a couple of Elumvians discuss Kain's age, and how he may retire soon, the elf-descendent being over several hundred years old. 'Did you have to stop teaching? What do you do now? Heh, did they put you in a home?'

He shook the thoughts out of his head, looking back to the book.

The extendable staff has several designs. The oldest were extended and shrunk manually, but the most common now are the size and thickness of a normal wand, but increase in size from the user's own magic.

Harry turned the page- and his eyes widened he saw a page spread of a picture of an extendable staff, heavily annotated and detailed.

"Perfect."

His first instinct was to tear the pages out- but then he remembered he'd borrowed the book, and that Pince probably would examine every last page when he returned it.

Harry took out his wand, and a roll of parchment. A quick spell and the spread was copied onto the parchment. He'd send it to Ollivander in the morning, provided he'd be able to find the Owlery. Seriously, why didn't they give people maps or something, it was so hard to find his way around this massive castle.

He packed up his stuff, before burying himself in his sheets, his eyes drifting up to look at the canopy of the four poster bed. Eventually, his eyes closed as he drifted off into sleep, unaware of what was

happening many miles away in Malfoy Manor.

Lord Voldemort sat in his stone throne, staring down the round table. The seats would usually be taken by his inner circle, Death Eaters who had something new to report, and of course, when he was making deals with others.

He usually addressed the others whilst his legions of Death Eaters stood in front of him, but this was for private matters, that he couldn't have spies interfering.

Recently, he'd been thinking of the Triwizard Cup. The resurrection- he had not felt the full power that he had expected. He should've found the other twin- or even better, used both. But he had taken the power from one, now he just needed the other.

He could feel a link with the two Potter boys since that Halloween all those years ago. And since the Cup, thanks to the ritual, he'd been draining the power of the other twin. With that power, he had gotten even stronger, and his Death Eaters had grown with him.

It was easy with a little practise to teach the new recruits (or curse fodder, as he thought in his head) how to instil a little fear in the Wizard public; all it took were a few raids and blasting off some Killing Curses and the odd Crucio. And with them, he'd been massacring those who opposed him, and the odd Mudblood family here and there.

And those proud people who opposed him still, what did they do? They cowered behind their Fidelius Charms, and precious wards, hoping he, Lord Voldemort would not find them, and went to Dumbledore-

Dumbledore. Yes, the man was responsible for what had recently happened. The other twin had been found. Perfect, he had assumed. He wouldn't have to waste time with this slow draining of power, he

knew enough rituals and spells to deal with it much quicker. But then- the power draining had stopped. Dumbledore had done something. With it, he began to quickly feel weaker again. His raids were down, and even his mindless Death Eaters were beginning to notice something was wrong.

"Loyal servants of Lord Voldemort," he started. "The time has come for to no longer waste time with petty raids on defenceless filth, from today; Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters will stride on the path of victory. There are three people that our enemies will look up to for hope. Scrimgeour. Dumbledore. Potter. Those three people are the three obstacles on our path. Our last obstacles. Once we have achieved victory over the weak fools of the Ministry and Dumbledore- we will rule Britain, and from there, we will spread over the globe, wiping the scum of Mudbloods and filth from the earth, and on a soil fertilised with their blood we will create a shining future for all of us pure and worthy."

The Death Eaters cheered, and Voldemort smiled to himself, pleased with the effects his words had on his servants. He looked around, at their masked faces, but instantly knowing who they were, he'd done this plenty of times before.

"Our first target will be that meddling old fool Dumbledore and the Potter boy. However, it will be a waste of both time and power to try and break the wards of Hogwarts, or any half-hearted attempts to abduct them the moment they step off them. Instead, we will capture someone who both would feel inclined to rescue. The other Potter boy- the long-lost Harry Potter."

Voldemort paused, in order to gage the reactions of the Death Eaters. No one seemed to oppose the idea- not that he would have changed his mind if he had not.

And all information in his organisation was on a need-to-know basis. He was hardly going to let these fools know he needed the boy's

power. And Dumbledore knew full well what would happen, and thus intensify his efforts to save the boy. And of course, how could the twin, the "Boy-Who-Lived", the so-called "Chosen One" sit back when he realised his brother would be the ingredient of a ritual, just like him?

As well as that, he was curious. Where had this boy disappeared to for eleven years and still remained out of Dumbledore's eye?

"They cannot know of these plans. If I should find out this has been leaked- I, Lord Voldemort will personally interrogate the traitor." He waited a few moments, letting the fear sink in. "But onto other matters. Why is it that so many of Dumbledore's Order still live, and why so many Aurors still fight instead of flee?"

His Death Eaters began to look uneasily at each other, as if trying to get someone to speak. As always, it fell upon Lucius.

"My lord, we-"

"Silence!"

It wasn't that he was displeased with his Death Eaters, no. What he needed was to keep them on their toes, their loyalty ran deep, but having fear for him would never hurt. The Death Eaters were fully expectant of a few Crucios per meeting when he met with a large group.

"Hunt down the Order of the Phoenix. Hunt down the Aurors. And bring me Harry Potter- alive. That is the will of Lord Voldemort."

"It shall be done, my lord and master," the Death Eaters stated simultaneously.

They began to file out of the room, leaving him alone with Bella and Lucius. For a moment, he intended to send Bella out, before he decided against it. It did concern her nephew, after all.



"Lucius," said Voldemort. "I have made my decision on what task young Draco should receive for his ascension to our ranks."

Harry yawned, as he found the Owlery. He'd woken up early so he wouldn't have to deal with anyone else seeing him. And, despite what he first thought, the place wasn't covered with owl droppings.

A fairly old looking owl crashed past him, dropping a copy of the Daily Prophet. He picked it up to give it back to the rather dazed bird, when his eyes caught the headline:

**OLLIVANDER KIDNAPPED!**

AN: And there you have it. God, I hated this chapter so much. I rewrote this thing about six times, and I still couldn't get it right.

I've just realised this fic has pretty much consisted of scenes going like Harry gets screwed over/ Harry meets people/ Harry gets screwed over/ Harry meets people, with a bunch of plot twists thrown in.

Sadly, this is not likely to change. It's a brilliant formula. Ha, just messing with you, I'm trying to break out of it as soon as possible.

CHP13